

ECHOING AND REECHOING



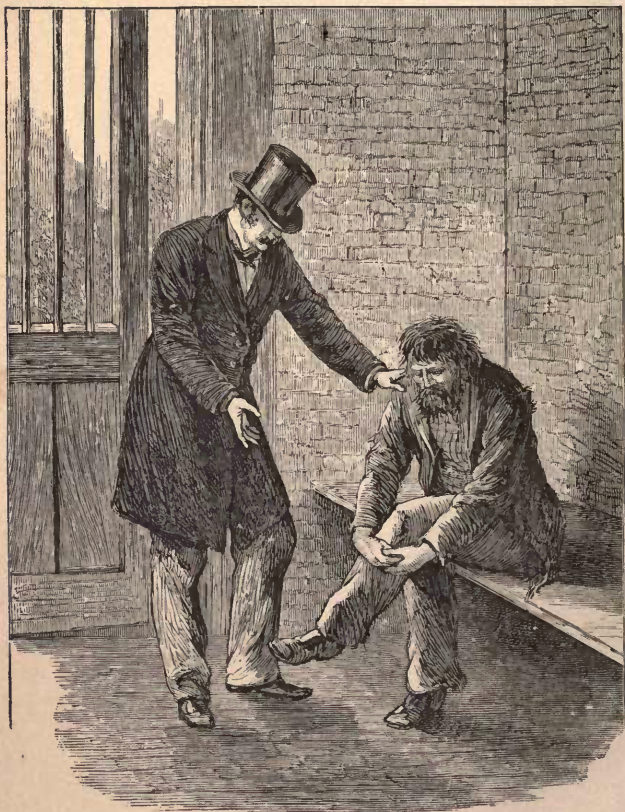
35
6

Bought at
BERTRAND SMITH
140 Pacific Ave.
LONG BEACH,
CALIFORNIA

~~100~~

~~57~~

100



"Well, my friend, can I do anything for you?" — Page 81.

11
10.
1.
CALIFORNIA

ECHOING AND RE-ECHOING.

BY

FAYE HUNTINGTON.

AUTHOR OF "THOSE BOYS," "DR. DEANE'S WAY," "MRS.
DEANE'S WAY," &C.



BOSTON:

D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY,

FRANKLIN ST., CORNER OF HAWLEY.

COPYRIGHT BY
D. LOTHROP & CO.
1878.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
1.—BEGINNINGS	7
2.—ECHOES FROM THE PAST	22
3.—A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT	32
4.—MISS ELMER'S SACRIFICE	42
5.—FULFILLING THE LAW	53
6.—HELEN'S OPPORTUNITIES	63
7.—FOR CHRIST'S SAKE	75
8.—A DINNER-TABLE TALK	86
9.—GOING FORWARD	95
10.—HELEN GETS AHEAD	105
11.—SEVERAL SURPRISED PEOPLE	115
12.—HELEN'S PRONOUNS	128

13.—“AND PETER”	142
14.—THE END OF THE QUARREL	161
15.—SURPRISES	175
16.—CALLED EARLY	190
17.—MRS. MOSHIER IS DISTURBED	200
18.—LEAVING THE RANKS	216
19.—MR. HARLEY SPEAKS	229
20.—HELEN AND TOM	242
21.—HELEN DECIDES A QUESTION	255
22.—CHRISTIAN GIVING	271
23.—FRAGMENTS	284
24.—UP THE MOUNTAIN	297

“Speaking once upon the hill tops, hill after hill took up the sound until the whole air was filled with my single words, and it seemed as if a thousand voices more powerful than my own were throwing back the words spoken by me. So every minister ought to have a *repeating church*, and every living heart in it ought to take up the sermon in its essential truths, and reverberate it until the whole moral air around him is full of echoing and re-echoing.”



ECHOING AND RE-ECHOING.



CHAPTER I.

BEGINNINGS.

"GO WORK TO-DAY IN MY VINEYARD."



TWO young men, Robert Niles and Newton Clark, met as they were hurrying, one up, the other down, George street. They forgot their hurry, forgot that there was any business in the world to need their attention, in their surprise and pleasure. They had been college classmates, and since the day of their graduation they had not met until now, here on the busy street.

"Well," said Newton Clark, "where from, when, and for how long?"

"From Chicago, yesterday, and probably for years ; perhaps for all time," returned the other, laughing ; then by way of explanation added : " I expect to go in with Smith & Ryle. And now may I ask of you where, what, and how ? "

" Oh, I am a fixture back here among the hills, a staid, steady-going farmer, with a wife and a baby. I am glad that you have come back to stay." Then, as if a new thought had come to him : " I say, Bob, you are the very man we want up in our neighborhood. I believe the Lord brought about this meeting of ours, to-day, for a purpose. It gives me a chance to get your ear before you get crowded with other work."

" Well, what *are* you driving at ? " asked Mr. Niles.

" Just this, we want a man to run a Sunday-school up there in the Clarkson neighborhood. There is a circuit of — I don't know how many miles, and not a single church-going man to be found there. It is a grand opening for some one who wants to work for the Lord."

" Humph ! why don't you step into it yourself ? "

" For several reasons," returned Mr. Clark.

"The principal one being that I have charge of a school at the Hollow, and have not time to attend to another unless I give up going to church. Now if you will take that place I will take you out as we go from the Sunday-school here, and bring you back to the evening service. What do you say, Bob?"

"I say that I couldn't think of undertaking such a thing," returned Bob Niles, with a sensation that was as near shame as anything.

"You don't mean to say that you have not been used to it—that is, to work of this sort?" he asked.

"I do mean just that, Newton. So you see I could not do it. I am not your man, after all; and you will have to conclude that if the Lord had anything to do with our meeting to-day it was for some other purpose."

"No," said Mr. Clark, "I shall not conclude that just yet. Because you *have* not is no reason why you *should* not, and I will not take your answer now. We will both turn the matter over prayerfully, and I'll see you again."

"No use; you may have my answer now. I'm

sorry to refuse you, Newton. Ask me anything in my line and I'll be ready to favor you."

And so after a little more pleasant talk the friends parted. Newton Clark went on his way, thinking sadly of that blessed winter season, five years back, when Robert Niles and himself, with many more, had dedicated themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was remembering the zeal of the young convert that had led him to make the proposition from which his friend had turned almost scornfully. But he said to himself: "I can but think that Bob only wants rousing a little. He is a noble fellow, and I can't help believing that the Lord has work for him to do up there among the Clarkson people," and he went home to pray for it.

Meantime Mr. Niles was concluding his arrangements with Smith & Ryle, and saying to himself: "That's just like Newt; he is just the same eager, over-zealous fellow that he used to be. I knew he would turn out a fanatic some day. Well, *his* religion means something. I am afraid he misunderstood me. I hope he didn't go off thinking that I am not with him in heart, though I cannot take up the work he

thinks I ought." *Why not?* This was the question that presented itself forcibly to his mind, and insisted upon being considered. Indeed, *why not?* There was no answer to fit the question, and he was much disturbed by his failure to satisfy himself. Of course *he would not*, that much was settled. He would do something, of course. They would need money up there to start a school, and Robert Niles actually thought to settle the matter with his conscience by giving a few dollars from his thousands. Sabbath morning came, and he went to the old familiar church on Court street. There had been a change of ministers in his five years' absence; he missed the dear old man who had long been his pastor; but he liked the face and manner of the stranger, and prepared to listen to the sermon, hoping to enjoy it. But when in clear, distinct tones the pastor announced his text, "Go work to-day in my vineyard," he almost lost his self-possession, so surely did these words seem meant for him. The preacher sought to bring the truth home to the heart of every disciple of Christ, that work for the advancement of his cause is a duty and a blessed privilege:

that "we are called into God's vineyard not merely to eat the fruit of it, nor simply to bask in its pleasant shade, but first of all to work for our Master; called to follow Christ first on earth, not first in heaven, not first in glory; first the cross, afterward the crown." It was urged that each one should ask for himself, "What wilt thou have me to do?" and when the answer should come, as it surely would if sought in sincerity, that there be no shrinking — no *shirking*.

Mrs. Niles was an invalid — not one of the nervous sort, nor one, whose aches and pains had absorbed her thoughts and interests. On the contrary, she had a lively interest in the world outside, and her children brought their bits of news, their own pleasures, and also their perplexities and trials, to "mother's room."

"Well, Robert," she said, as her son came in from church, "how do you like our pastor?"

He hesitated.

"Well, mother, to tell the truth I haven't thought about *him*. I have been fighting a battle. You know about Newt Clark's proposition? I was sure that I would not do it; but to-day's

sermon made it clear that to shirk it is to sin. I saw Clark this evening, and told him that I would ride up there this week and look over the ground."

Mrs. Niles smiled, and said :

" Well, Robert, I wish you God-speed. And I can tell you that taking up work at once as you are beginning your business life here will make it much easier than if you had waited until business cares absorbed your thoughts. Robert your father would have been glad."

But that sermon had its lesson for others beside Robert Niles. Mr. and Mrs. Norton Graves lived a mile or two out of town. As they were driving home Mr. Graves said :

" Well, Clara, the parson brought things pretty close home to your folks to-day, didn't he ? "

Mr. Graves was not a Christian, and he was a little bitter toward Christians in general, and toward a few in particular. He liked to hear what he called *home thrusts* from the pulpit. For his part, so he was wont to express himself, he thought that church-members needed plain talk as well as sinners. He knew some that were no better for their professions.

While Mrs. Graves was a follower of Christ, it must be confessed that hers was not that close following which brings the disciple into the very presence of the Master, and makes the life radiant with the joy and peace that grows out of the communion. Especially was she lacking in the grace of meekness, and her husband's raillery generally irritated her. She would say :

"It is no excuse for you, Norton Graves, and you know it. No matter how I live, you've got to stand by yourself at last." To-day she answered, softly :

"Yes, Norton, he did ; so close that I feel it, and I am going to work. And I don't mean to belong to the '*I go, sir*' family either. I am in dead earnest."

"When are you going to begin ?" asked her husband, good-humoredly. "Am I your first subject ?"

"I am going to begin just where Mr. Reid advised ; at *home, in my own soul*. I am going to root out some of the weeds that have been choking the growth of the good. You needn't tell me there is a chance for hard work and

plenty of it. I know it; and, Norton, there is so *much* to do that I shall need *your* help."

She said this as he helped her from the carriage, and as he drove over to the stables he said to himself, or to his horse :

"Whew! Who would have thought it? Now I suppose I shall have a pious wife in earnest. Heretofore her religion has not caused a very marked difference in our ways of thinking and doing, but if she gets up an enthusiasm over it, it might be inconvenient. I guess, upon the whole, I'll keep quiet and not arouse any stronger feeling by ridiculing her."

Meanwhile, in her own room, upon her knees, Mrs. Graves was confessing her unfaithfulness to her covenant vows, and asking direction as to the way in which the Lord would have her work. Could her husband have heard that prayer he must have felt that there *was a difference*; that though she had been influenced and led by him so that she had for the time lost her hold upon Christ, yet having been adopted into the family of the Father, there was a difference which, unless he would consent to receive the renewing grace, would separate them forever.

When they met at the dinner table they did not renew the subject, he acting upon his resolution, and she from dread of his sarcastic remarks. But toward evening he said :

“Clara, would you like to go down town to church this evening?”

“Why, can we go?” she replied, surprised, for they never went to church, evenings.

“Certainly we *can*. I suppose we might go every Sunday evening if we tried,” he said smiling. If you are going to undertake that job you spoke of you’ll need all the help you can get,” he added with a wicked sort of laugh.

“*Don’t*, Norton,” she said; then, hesitating, “I’ll tell you what I should like better than going out Sabbath evenings. If I only could go down to the Thursday evening prayer-meeting! It would be *such* a help,” and there were tears in her eyes.

“Why, Clara, I never objected to your going to prayer-meeting.”

“No, but I want you to go too,” she said, timidly.

“Oh! I thought I’d be your next subject, but I didn’t expect you would get to me quite so

soon ; got that work in your own heart all done already ? ”

“*Please*, Norton, I want to tell you that as our lives are so linked together that — well, some women might — but for me, I can not grow toward heaven unless the good seed is springing up in your heart also.”

He made no reply, but brought around the carriage and they went to church, to the surprise of several people ; among them was Mr. John Graves, or Professor Graves, as he was designated. He knew the ways of his brother’s family so well that he wondered what unusual circumstance had brought them out in the evening, and he said to his sister-in-law as they came out of church :

“What in the world brought you from your retirement on a Sabbath evening ? ”

With a little surprised air she replied :

“Why, didn’t *you* hear the sermon this morning ? ”

“Yes, I heard it, but I don’t see the connection exactly.”

“Don’t you ? Well, what is more natural than being persuaded that we ought to work,

that we should come to find out what to do, and how to do it?" said Mrs. Graves, not so lightly, but the brother-in-law detected the undertone of seriousness, and he replied, gravely:

"That is a good idea, Clara; I hope you'll make Norton think so. Good-night."

Professor Graves was the principal of the high-school. He was a Christian man; he opened school with devotional exercises; he was particular about the deportment of his pupils, looking after their moral interests. His pupils liked him; he was social and mingled much with them in a free and easy way, but *he had never led one of them to Christ*. That sermon had set him to thinking, and going home that evening, after the bit of a talk with his brother's wife, he said to himself (he had no wife to talk to):

"Well, I *ought*, I *will*."

The next morning he read the chapter as usual, but there was a depth of feeling showing itself in his voice, and he prayed, using accustomed and familiar words. Yet how differently they sounded; even the scholars noticed it. And when he said, "There will be a meeting for

praise and prayer in this room this evening ; I hope to see many of you here ; I wish I could meet you *all* here," a thrill of surprise ran through the room. The surprise was not more at the announcement than at the earnestness of his invitation ; and there were many who resolved to attend the meeting, "just because the Professor seemed so earnest about it." The truth was, Mr. John Graves felt that he had been an idler too long, and now he was going to make up in zeal what he had lost by delay.

The minister and his wife had their bit of talk about the sermon. He lay back on the lounge weary and half discouraged ; she hovering about was cheerful and hopeful.

"Why, Ralph," she said, "your people were very attentive to-day ; really interested I thought, and I never heard you preach with more power."

"Yes, they were attentive ; I seldom have anything to complain of in that direction. People listen, criticise, perhaps even approve the truth, then go away and forget all about the meaning it has for them. They seem unconscious of the fact that it has any reference to their lives. Yes, they were attentive, but how

many hearts were reached? How many lives will be effected by the truths presented to-night? That is the question."

"I am not sure that it is a question for you to ask," she said, smiling. "Don't you see," she continued, "it is *your* business to deliver your message faithfully, and — reverently I say it, is it not the business of the Lord, your Leader, to see to the hearts, to prepare them, by the working of the Spirit, for the truth? It seems to me that if we are Christ's servants, doing his work, that we have no need to worry over the much or the little that we seem to accomplish."

"I suppose you are right," replied the husband.

"I think I am, for I remember you said something like that in one of your sermons a week or two ago," she answered, laughing. "You told us that God would see to results, and I took courage and decided not to give up quite yet. You told us not to be discouraged by a want of appreciation or a lack of visible success, and urged us to *stand fast*."

The minister laughed now.

"And all that did you so much good that you

are throwing it back at me. Well, I *do* believe it all in my heart, but this poor human nature gets the upper hand sometimes, and when it does I am thrown off my balance. It is well that I have somebody to help *right up*."

After a little silence he spoke again :

"Grace, I feel that hitherto I have not been using all my powers in the service of Christ ; hereafter *I* mean to do better work in the Lord's vineyard."





CHAPTER II.

ECHOES FROM THE PAST.

“What shall we do that we might work the works of God.”



DOU remember Ralph Ried? He is Abbie's brother, and cousin of Ester. Ah! now you remember! I thought you would if I spoke of Ester. Since he went to Europe you have lost sight of him, though you often wonder how his character has developed, and if he grew to be the sort of man he promised and you hoped. Well, here he is, pastor of the Court Street Church. You are watching now to see what stand he will take upon those questions that vex the souls of men who tremble before the threat-

ened displeasure and opposition of what may be the stronger, if not the truer side. When you knew him he was not a Christian, and you ask how it all has come about. The story of his conversion would make a chapter by itself. The little card which Ester took from the hanging case in a fancy store as they were shopping one day, and whose solemn message came with force to Ester's heart, was picked up long after in a deserted room of the Ried mansion, and with the words, "I solemnly agree as God shall help me." A flash of memory brought back to Ralph the sorrowful scenes of those days of bereavement which followed so closely upon that morning's shopping. The card was dingy and the words half defaced ; but prompted by the spirit within that was reviving old associations, he studied out the sentences : — "To try to save at least one soul each year."

"Dear me," he thought, "that was half a dozen years ago. If I had adopted these resolutions then — Well, what if I had, whose soul might I have saved? Perhaps poor Tom Carter might have been saved. That would have been something worth while, wouldn't it, now?"

“And yourself?”

Ralph Ried never got away from the thoughts that were awakened by the words of the old worn card, until they drew him to a decision that changed not so much his outer life as the motives and purposes of his living.

About that time he wrote to his sister:

“And now comes the question, how can I best serve the Lord? Time and money, and life itself, are his. How shall I best employ all for his honor? . . . Next week I expect to go with Mr. Holmes to Chester to conduct a meeting. We go as a delegation from the Y. M. C. A. You are saying, ‘That is new work for Ralph.’ Well, it is; yet it seems as though I had been doing it for years, I am so happy in it. So glad, so sure am I that the Lord is leading me, that I have settled into a calm content, ready to follow whithersoever the path tendeth. Sure am I that though it be by a way that I know not, it will be the right way. I do not yet feel certain that I ought to enter upon a course of theological study, but it may be that this is the way.”

Step by step the Lord was leading him on in the way of preparation for the work of preaching

the gospel. It was wonderful how the proud, self-reliant young man submitted to be led. He who had been accustomed to plan and execute both for himself and others, gave himself up with a glad submission to the leadership of One higher than himself. And yet he grew in strength and power, and those who had been accustomed to trust him and lean upon him, trusted him more implicitly and leaned more securely upon his strong arm.

The first years of his ministry had gone by, but he had lost none of his ardor. On the contrary, he grew more eager — “more and better work” was his own motto, and the one he was trying to get others to adopt.

Going home from church one evening, Mrs. Coville said, in a fretful tone :

“I’m sick of hearing Mr. Ried talk about ‘working Christians.’ I guess if he had as many to cook and wash and mend for as I have he would be glad to fall back on the text that says we are saved by faith. I am sure I haven’t any time for Christian work, as he says. I’d look pretty leaving my family while I went about with tracts.”

"But, Mrs. Coville," said her neighbor, who was walking with her, "you know there has always been a holding back upon the part of the people here. There are some, like yourself, who have very little time for work outside their own homes, but there are others —"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Mrs. Coville. "There's the Elmer girls — there's no reason under the sun why they shouldn't take hold; but they won't, and Mr. Ried may preach about it until he is gray, and he'll never get Rachel Elmer waked up."

"He won't if she doesn't go to church to hear the preaching," laughed Mrs. Bates.

"It's a pity she shouldn't. She might take hold of things. She just keeps at that everlasting embroidery. I know what I'll do. I'll have her out next Sunday, see if I don't," said Mrs. Coville, emphatically.

Mrs. Bates smiled. It would not do to tell Mrs. Coville that she was about to join the working forces of the church in spite of her protests, and if any one could coax Rachel Elmer out of her shell it would seem to cover half a dozen ordinary efforts. The "Elmer girls" lived alone in

a queer old house, of the sort that attract attention in these days when to be popular is to be an hundred years old. There were only these two left. All the rest had looked their last upon the quaint old house, and for years the two sisters had lived on together quietly, but not happily.

"I hate it, I do. This horrid stillness and sameness will kill me," Lydia would exclaim as they sat together in the long afternoons.

"Oh no; not so bad as *that*, I hope," Miss Rachel would reply, looking up from her embroidery and smiling placidly.

"I honestly believe it will," Lydia would say, "or else I shall lose my senses. I cannot endure it."

"I don't see what you mean at all," returned the elder sister. "I am sure it is very pleasant here. We have everything we need. If you want new furniture you might get it I suppose. I am satisfied with the old, but the parlors might be refurnished," and Miss Rachel sighed at the thought of giving up the quaint old chairs and heavy mahogany sideboards.

“Oh, Rachel! It isn’t that at all. I like the old things, but —”

“What then? I am sure it is very comfortable and quiet —”

“Quiet! I should think it was! It is just the quiet that distracts me. I’d rather live in a cotton factory or an orphan-asylum than endure this horrible stillness another day.”

“Oh, Lydia, don’t talk so wildly. If you would only try to interest yourself in something. See, this is almost done,” holding up her work. “Isn’t it beautiful? It is four months since I began it, but there is a great amount of work on it.”

“I should think so! And what is it good for?” returned the other sister, contemptuously. “I can tell you, Rachel, that I have more than once been tempted to seize that rag and throw it into the fire. Parlor furniture! What do we want of a parlor, anyway? We never have any company. Even the minister shuns us, and no wonder. Such unsocial bodies as we are! I know one thing I will do. I’ll get a croquet set the next time I’ll go to town.”

“A croquet set! Why, Lydia Elmer, are you crazy?”

“Maybe. I told you I should be,” said Lydia, laughing now. “You wanted me to be interested in something. I leaned over the fence at Mr. Coville’s last night and watched the game, and I think it is really a nice thing; and I am going to get a set.”

“What an absurd thing! Do you know, Lydia Elmer, how old you are?”

“Yes, ma’am,” replied Lydia, demurely. “Twenty-six next 10th day of October.”

“And to talk of buying a game, as if you were a child to be amused!”

The conversation ended, as usual, by Lydia’s busying herself in a book, while Rachel put the last stitches in the ivy pattern she was working as a border for her screen. Presently there was a light tap at the side door, and Mrs. Coville, their nearest neighbor, entered.

“No; I won’t let you put away my things. I’ll just drop my sun-bonnet down here. I ran over to invite you to go with me to Mr. Patterson’s, to the sewing society. Husband says I can have old Billy to drive if I can get any one to

go with me, and I thought of you right away. Mrs. Patterson is such a nice woman; I know you would enjoy going there, both of you."

Mrs. Coville had changed her plan of attack and decided upon the sewing society as a preliminary skirmish. Miss Rachel looked her surprise.

"Thank you," she said, "but I don't think we can go."

"Speak for yourself, Rachel," interposed Lydia. "I mean to accept Mrs. Coville's invitation. For my part, I've just got to get out of this dull place if only for one afternoon."

"I am sure that you will enjoy the ride, if you will only consent to go," said Mrs. Coville, addressing the elder sister. "I don't go very often myself, but I have taken a notion to go this time and have you go with me."

I think Miss Rachel Elmer was surprised out of herself, and if, when she returned to her senses, she was sorry for having given her promise to go to the sewing society, she was too tenacious of her word to withdraw. And Mrs. Coville departed, wondering at her easy victory.

"Now if they'll only put her in as directress

or something," she said, as she hurried home, fearing that her biscuits were burning, "I'll have her out to prayer-meeting yet."

And yet Mrs. Coville was sick and tired of Mr. Ried's talk about Christian work !






CHAPTER III.

A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT.

"YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME."

ROFESSOR Graves shut and bolted the door, and then he sat down to think. Just what he was to do was a puzzle to him. Of course he must make some sort of preparation for performing his part as the leader of the meeting he had appointed. He was not used to anything of that sort. To be sure, he was quite regular at the weekly prayer-meeting, and was generally ready to follow the leader with "some remarks" when the meeting was announced as "open," or to lead in prayer

whenever called upon; but he very reasonably concluded that he had undertaken something very different from this. A boys' and girls' meeting to be a success needs a skillful conductor, he thought; and as the hour drew near he more and more doubted his ability. He even contemplated asking Mr. Ried to come in and take charge of the meeting; then he remembered that *his* work could not be done by his pastor. One would not have supposed it possible that the dignified and self-contained professor could have been so perturbed.

"I suppose they'll all be dumb as posts," he said to himself; "that is, if any of them come. I ought to have appointed the meeting in the small room. Half a dozen or so will feel forlorn in that great chapel. I expect it will be like the meeting Uncle Jotham led once. The minister was absent, and there was only Uncle Jotham and six or eight women. In that place it was not allowed women to speak or pray in public. So Uncle Jotham gave out a hymn, thanking God that the sisters might sing; then he prayed, hoping that some brethren would come in soon; then they sang; afterward he read a chapter,

and made some remarks ; still no brother came to his aid ; they sang again ; still no help. Finally, Uncle Jotham, grown desperate, said, 'We'll close with the Doxology,' and they closed. 'That was a meeting for "prayer and conference"' said Uncle Jo in telling of it. "I suppose," continued the professor, talking to the stove-pipe, "that there is a way to draw out the young people ; but *how* to do it, that is the question."

The professor was growing very anxious for the success of his experiment, not because it *was* of his originating, but because he had suddenly grown anxious for the spiritual good of his pupils and the progress of Christ's kingdom. It was wonderful how important things seemed to him now, which two days ago he scarcely thought of. He tried to select a passage of Scripture to read, tried to frame a suitable opening, but his thoughts got into a whirl, and he wondered if he could be growing nervous. At last, with an earnest prayer for help, he went down to the school-house. Meeting one of the boys at the gate, he said :

"Harry, I think we will do better to have our meeting in the little room."

“Think so, sir?” said Harry.

“Why, yes; we shall feel more sociable than with a few of us in that great room. Don’t *you* think so?”

“Maybe; but if there should be a good many?”

“Oh, well, it isn’t likely there’ll be many. I’ll go and start a fire in the little room.”

The fire didn’t burn very well; the professor had to go to the wood-room and get more kindling. Then the lamps were out of order and had to be trimmed; and while busy at this uncongenial work Mr. Graves heard the constant tread of feet through the hall and up and down stairs?”

“I think, sir,” returned Harry, “that you will find that it is all going *up*.”

“What do you mean?”

“Why, only that I haven’t heard any one come down; but a good many have gone up,” said Harry.

“Let’s go and see,” said Professor Graves.

One moment he paused in the doorway of the chapel; then crossing to the desk, he bent his head in silent thanksgiving. He scarcely hoped

so meet a dozen, and here were forty of his pupils !

An hour earlier Helen Betson was in *her* room ; the door was not bolted or even closed, but stood wide open, and voices came up from the dining-room below. Her father was saying :

“ Where does Helen want to go to-night ? ”

“ To prayer-meeting at the school-chapel,” replied Mrs. Betson.

“ That is a new thing, isn’t it ? ” asked the gentleman.

“ Which — the prayer-meeting, or Helen’s wanting to go to one ? ”

It was her brother Tom’s voice now, and Helen shivered. Was Tom going to make the thing ridiculous, and so keep her from going ? Because, if Tom laughed, that would spoil it for Helen. That was the way so many things were spoiled. She waited for her father’s reply.

“ Well, both,” he answered, laughing a little. “ I never heard of a prayer-meeting at the school-chapel, and Helen hasn’t been in the habit of going to such places of late, eh ? ”

Helen’s cheeks flushed. She recalled a winter, three years ago, when for a time she had

grown to be interested in prayer-meetings, and when, as she thought, she had given her heart to Christ. It was her cousin Dick who led her to this point, and who was always her escort so long as he remained in the family. Then he went home, and there was no one to go with her, and now it was a long, long time since she had been to a prayer-meeting. She had not been walking in the light, yet she clung to her hope through Christ. Now and then a fling from Tom's sarcastic tongue would cause her color to rise. Tom said, in the height of her interest, that it would not last, and afterward he delighted to say, "I told you so." At tea-time Helen had asked her mother's permission to go out that evening, and, in reply to her question, had explained about the meeting, also stating that Flora Niles was going also, and that her brother would call for them and bring them home. Her mother's consent gained, she went up to her room to get ready. Presently Tom left the dining-room whistling. She heard him cross the hall to the hat-rack, but the opening of the outer door she did not hear, though she was

listening. Some way she felt that she should breathe easier after he was gone.

"Helen," he called from below.

"Well, Tom, what is it?" Her voice was steady, but her heart was throbbing with excitement.

"Say, wouldn't your own brother do as well as Flora Niles' brother?"

"Why, yes, a great deal better, only —"

"Only you thought I wouldn't go. But I have a mind to go to that meeting myself."

Helen came out of her room and leaned over the railing.

"That will be splendid," she said; "and say, Tom, don't you suppose you could coax Willard to go, because Clara says her father will not allow her to go out without Willard, and she wants to go so badly?"

Tom laughed.

"I'd look pretty going about trying to get folks out to prayer-meeting! Well, I'll see."

Helen was pretty sure that he would not only see, but *do*.

As Professor Graves looked over the little gathering he thought of all his pupils. Tom

Betson and Willard Hunting were the last ones he expected to see. But there they were, and many others whose presence astonished him.

True, many of them came just to please the Professor, or to see what it was all about, or because somebody else came ; and Professor Graves understood this, and longed for power to interest and hold them, and felt that no time should be lost.

“Some of us,” he said, “love the Saviour. Let us speak freely and tell these others who do not know this love what a blessed thing it is to belong to Christ. . . . And now I want to express my regret for the past ; my Christian friends, may I not say *our* regret ? If some of these who do not know this blessedness should be led to receive Christ, the first thing they will ask will be, Why didn’t you tell us before ? Why did you let us go on so long in that dangerous path ? For my own part I have no answer but this : I have been so absorbed in endeavoring to advance you intellectually that I have let the spiritual slip too much out of mind. God grant that my awakening to a sense of my neglect may not be too late.”

It was a solemn meeting, very different from what any of them had anticipated. Even Helen Betson found voice to say :

“ I love the Saviour. I am sure I do. I wish you would all come to him.”

Her friend Flora said :

“ I have been looking about since yesterday for some work to do for Christ. Perhaps he will give me something to do through this meeting. I think it would be pleasant to work for the Saviour.”

The Professor said :

“ I think if our pastor could know how many hearts were reached by that sermon of yesterday morning he would feel that his work was not in vain.”

Going home Tom said :

“ I say, Helen, wasn't it awful hard work to say that to-night? ”

“ Why, no ; that is, it wouldn't have been if you had been away,” she said, between laughing and crying.

“ Whew ! I guess I'll look out how I offer to be your escort next time,” returned Tom, pleasantly.

“Oh, I don’t mean that — I — Tom, you know you make such sarcastic speeches sometimes, but I shall not be afraid of you any more. It seems as if I had lived ten years since tea-time.”

“I don’t see any wrinkles,” said Tom, looking into her face.

“It is fret and worry that make wrinkles, I’ve heard mother say, and that isn’t the kind of living I mean,” said Helen; then, speaking earnestly, “Tom, I wish you would step over to the other side. *I want you*. It is so hard to be alone,” and Helen’s voice failed.

“Why, little sister, I believe you’ve really got the missionary spirit upon you. I can’t quite see the way clear to what you ask, but you need never be afraid of me. I will own to you that I honor your religion more to-night than ever before, and Professor Graves has risen in the esteem of us boys by what he said to-night. I have often made fun of your notion, but I will say that the love that can stand three years in the atmosphere of our home must be genuine, if there’s enough left to speak of as you did to-night.”

Was Helen sorry that she had witnessed for Christ?



CHAPTER IV.

MISS ELMER'S SACRIFICE.

"HEREIN IS MY FATHER GLORIFIED."



R. Ried's sermon from the text, "Go work to-day in my vineyard," had echoed and re-echoed throughout the congregation, and many, as we have noted, had been stirred to life and activity. But activity needs to be directed, and to give this directness was the aim of the pastor from week to week; and those who had been incited to greater earnestness came now regularly to the Thursday evening meeting to gather up hints as to their ways of working, and real practical talks they heard.

Robert Niles, whose eloquent orations had been something remarkable in college times, and who was now a young man with fine literary tastes, listened eagerly to the simple, straightforward talks, that had in them no effort at oratorical effect or literary finish; yet it may be that they were eloquent and finished, for Ralph Ried could not easily be anything else.

They were all there — young Niles, Helen Betson and Professor Graves, as well as Mrs. Coville, who had succeeded in her plan of getting Rachel Elmer out to prayer-meeting. The means she employed to bring about this result were best known to herself. It was a strange thing, for when had Rachel ever been seen at prayer-meeting? Indeed, she was very seldom at church upon the Sabbath. She was a member of the church, and had been since her early girlhood. For years after she had grown to womanhood the care of an invalid mother had shut her off from general society, and to a great extent from church privileges; then her own ill-health kept her much at home until the habit became fixed, and she lived a lonely, unsocial life. Her sister Lydia was at once her pet and

her plague. Not that she *petted* her; on the contrary, she fretted and scolded the younger sister, to whom their quiet life was a torment. But, notwithstanding the recluse life she led, here she was sitting quietly beside Mrs. Coville, listening to words which she was certain were meant for her; not that she fancied the pastor knew anything about her particular shortcomings, or had any thought of her anyway, but she herself knew that she was the unfruitful branch; and when the speaker in Bible language told of the cutting off and casting away, she began to look upon her own life to see if she could find any fruit whatsoever, saying to herself that however small and unlovely the fruit, if *any* might be found, it would prove her union with Christ. It might be sour and crabbed fruit; but if so, there was hope in the words, "And every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Speaking of this purging: "It is," said the pastor, "the lopping off of hindrances, as the master of the vineyard pinches off the overgrowth of leaf and shoot that fruit-buds may develope and mature; so the Husbandman comes into our lives with his pruning-

shears, and clips here and there of the overgrowth of that which to us seems to make life more fair and symmetrical. Now it is a cherished plan, a darling ambition, a joy, a hope, each of which to us appears legitimate and laudable, but which may be taking too much of the vital force of our lives, thus hindering the development of bud, flower and fruit."

Here Rachel lost a few sentences; she was thinking how her life had been narrowed down. Surely the Husbandman had not forgotten to prune closely. Again and again had she felt the sharpness of this cutting off of joys, and still she was not conscious of an increase of fruit. But Mr. Ried was saying:

"Are we ready to enter upon this work, to take up the pruning-knife and lop off these habits of living that dwarf the fruit? Are we ready to put a limit to the growth of our affections, to our ambitions, to all our plans of life? To lop off our pride, and self-indulgences, all self-will, hatred and anger? How many of us, I ask, are willing to have our lives so clipped, and cut back, and contracted, that there shall be nothing in the way of a steady, grand and beautiful

Christian development? Habits of living, accustomed ways, are the hardest to overcome. In spite of the pruning strong shoots are continually starting out, and the love of ease taking possession, the branch is likely to be fruitless. Let us see to it that of us it may be said, 'Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.' May we all have this mark of discipleship. Have you? Have I?"

"Have I?"

Miss Elmer walked home quietly enough. Some people always preserve an outward calm while *the inside* is anything but tranquil. Her neighbors, Mrs. Coville and Mrs. Bates, carried on a conversation full of kindly interest in each other's families.

"Freddy didn't go to school to-day, Johnny said," was a remark of Mrs. Bates which caught Miss Elmer's ear.

"No," returned her friend, "the walk is too long. I am sorry to have to keep him at home. It was quite time he was put steadily at books. I do wish we could have a school for small children near us."

"We do need one," said Mrs. Bates.

"I don't suppose there is any hope of such a thing. There are not scholars enough to make it pay; but there are half a dozen about Freddy's age who really ought to be at school. Miss Rachel, suppose *you* were to open a school for little children?" Mrs. Coville said this playfully, very much as she would say, "Pretty moon, silver moon, come down to me," with about as much thought as to results. Then she continued: "I often feel that my childrens' mental interests are being sacrificed to their physical."

"And the rest of us feel the same thing," said Mrs. Bates. "Some one of us ought to turn teacher."

"Mrs. Patterson tells me that her Emma is going to Boston to study the Kindergarten methods, but that will come too late for our little ones."

"Yes" — Mrs. Coville spoke sadly — "I suppose it is all for the best; but Freddy felt so badly to-day that I cried with him. Good-night, Rachel. I hope you enjoyed the meeting."

Late that night Miss Elmer turned wearily

upon her pillow, and so restless was she that Lydia exclaimed, petulantly :

“I declare, Rachel! Prayer-meetings don’t seem to have a tranquillizing effect upon your nervous system! You’ll wear yourself out turning over so often. You ought to have a patent spring so you’d go over easy.”

But Miss Elmer, had she chosen to reply, would have said that the prayer-meeting had nothing to do with it — that her uneasiness grew out of the talk to which she had listened on the way home. She had not yet come to see that the train of thought started at the meeting was working up into practical shape helped on by her neighbor’s expression of need.

“It is all true,” she considered while Lydia slept, “and more too. These children around here need to have something done for them quickly. Some of them are on the road to idle, ignorant manhood, but I could not do that of all things. I have no taste for it.”

“But Christ pleased not himself.”

Queer how her thoughts answered themselves.

“But it would be a real trouble. Children do litter up a house so. They would have to come

in at the front door, and I hate a littered entry."

"Christ pleased not himself."

"There's little Molly Severn, I'd have to take her, and she is such a disagreeable child. I could not endure to teach her. But why do I think about it? Of course, I won't do anything of that sort. It would be very unpleasant."

"Christ pleased not himself."

"But how absurd it would be. *One of the Elmers!* Such an old family as ours. I ought to consider the family name. School-teaching would be a new thing for the Elmers. Dear me, I don't believe I am myself to-night. If it were not the most absurd thing in the world I would try it, but I can not, so there's no use in thinking about it."

Miss Elmer did not find it easy to change the current of her thoughts, and she could not get rid of the one invariable answer to all her objections.

"Christ pleased not himself."

The next morning, at the breakfast table, she said:

"Lydia, I am thinking that we might as well start a little school."

Lydia dropped her fork suddenly, and said in a tone of alarm :

“Why, Rachel! What do you mean? Has anything happened?”

“A great many things happen every day, I suppose,” said Miss Elmer, composedly.

“To us, I mean—to our money?” almost gasped Lydia.

“Oh, no, not that I have heard. I had not thought of teaching for pay, though I suppose that would be best, but I’ll tell you about it,” and she proceeded to rehearse the talk of her two neighbors.

It was not hard to gain Lydia’s approval of her scheme. Then followed two busy days, and Miss Rachel was ready for her experiment. She had lopped off pride and selfish ease, and the fruit of self-denial was already developing. As the half-dozen rollicking little creatures came trooping into the house Lydia said:

“Well, I did say the other day that I would rather live in an orphan-asylum, but I did not think that I should be taken at my word.”

There were plenty of people to wonder, and

some to make ill-natured criticisms, but there were some to rejoice, among them Mrs. Coville.

"How *did* you happen to think of such a blessed thing?" she said one rainy afternoon, coming over to bring an umbrella for Freddy.

Miss Elmer smiled as she pinned one boy up in an old shawl, and wrapped a water-proof cape around another, and tied a handkerchief about the throat of a third.

"Well," she said, "it was the first thing that came to me after that Thursday evening talk about bearing fruit, and I had no time to waste in looking for something more congenial—I mean that I fancied would be more congenial."

"Well," said Mrs. Coville, "since Freddy became lame I have murmured a great deal, because of the distance from school. I did not know what the Lord had waiting for my boy. I have such a restful feeling about him now, and to think I might have saved all that worry."

"And so it all came of her going to prayer-meeting with me! How the Lord pays us back, even our smallest efforts!" thought Mrs. Coville, as she picked her way home through the rain.

And Miss Elmer, standing in the door, after the last boy had gone, repeated, softly :

“Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”





CHAPTER V.

FULFILLING THE LAW.

“BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS.”



RS. Coville was widowed! Not a week since the darkness fell so suddenly upon her, and the bitterness of her lot she had scarcely realized as yet, though she saw in prospect the heaviness of the burden she must bear, and was ready to sink under it. If things had only been different she thought she could have borne her loss better; if her children had been older; if their circumstances had been less straightened, or if the little they possessed had been differently invested; but as things were, such a load of

responsibility rested upon her that she seemed to have neither time nor strength for the luxury of grief. She did not know that afterward she would thank God for these imperative demands upon her energies both of body and mind, realizing how gracious a Providence had thus kept her from utter despair. She had not yet had time to rally from the first shock, and she felt dumb and paralyzed. She did not rebel; her faith kept her from that; but her heart was sore and sad; and too weak and sick to walk to church, she sat out the Sabbath hours with her little ones clinging about her—her fatherless little ones! God help her and them. Thank God for such there *is* a precious promise.

That evening Mrs. Bates looked over the way at her neighbor's dark windows, and she sighed as she turned away.

“Dear me, Mrs. Coville is sitting over there in the dark. Yes, to be sure, it is dark to her all the same if she has a light. Poor woman! That was good talk this morning about bearing one another's burdens. I never thought how much that took in. If people only would, how much more happiness there might be in the

world. It is so much easier getting along with some one to give a lift. But it won't do a bit of good. There's John, now, he won't think of anybody to help ; and as for me, I have all I can do to carry my own burdens. How very tired I am to-night. Seems to me I get tired very easily. John, how did you like the sermon this morning ? ”

“ First-rate,” replied the husband. “ None of your high-flown preaching for me. One good, practical discourse like that this morning will do more good than a whole month of sermons like Dr. La Salle's.”

“ I don't know about the good,” returned his wife.

“ What do you mean ? Didn't *you* like it this morning ? ”

“ Oh, yes ; but as to the practical benefit of sermons I am not sure that they amount to much. We listen, and express ourselves edified ; but whether we are really built up in good works is doubtful. I don't think there is much *working out* sermons.”

“ I don't know — perhaps not. But I suppose

we can not judge — only so far as we are immediately concerned,” said Mr. Bates.

“And that’s just it. I know I never carry out any of his ideas,” and Mrs. Bates looked very sober, though her husband smiled pleasantly upon the little woman who had suddenly taken her shawl from the closet and brought her overshoes to the fire.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

“I thought I would step over and speak a word to Mrs. Coville, and if she can be persuaded to go to church I will stay with the children this evening. You may call as you go along.”

Again Mr. Bates smiled, as he thought how his wife’s tender, loving sympathy would help Mrs. Coville to lift her burden.

It was not in words the light and warmth that Mrs. Bates brought into that dark and cheerless home. Stepping softly, she lighted and shaded the lamp, stirred the wood fire into a flame; and learning from Freddy, who followed her in his limping gait, as she went to the kitchen for wood, that they had not had supper, she set her tin pot on the stove, and before Mrs. Coville

had time to remonstrate, she had a simple tea-table spread.

"Now, my dears," she said, "bring your mother's chair;" and to the mother, "I knew you wouldn't feel like doing much, so I brought over a pot of cocoa and this cold chicken; and now I'll just get out your things if you'll let me, for Mr. Bates is going to call for you to take you to church this evening."

Of course Mrs. Coville objected, but her friend said:

"It will be better for you. Lina, here, needs to go." Speaking very tenderly: "you must remember your children; and the sooner you take up your new life the better for them."

The oldest boy was twelve years old, and while his mother and Lina were gone to church, and after Freddy and little Clara were asleep, Mrs. Bates and Henry had a long, earnest talk; and Mrs. Coville never knew how much of the strong, brave endeavor, and the tender care-taking which her boy came to manifest, grew out of the suggestions and encouragements of that same little Mrs. Bates. And as Henry grew older, and more and more lifted burdens from his

mother's shoulders, and her friends congratulated her now and then upon having so good a son, neither of them realized how a word in sorrow had been a fulfilling of the law, "Bear ye one another's burdens."

But while Mr. Bates looked approvingly upon his wife's little acts of kindness, and saw in them a practical application of the morning's sermon, what had he to do with it? Had it no meaning for him?

Very soon Mrs. Coville found herself in a somewhat embarrassing position. Forms of the law must be gone through with. Matters of administration and guardianship must be attended to; and then came the question who would be the friend in need to stand as her surety in these things. Mr. Cramer, who had been loud in expressions of sympathy? Not he. He did not believe in a woman's undertaking any business of this sort, anyway. She would better let some man take the whole thing in charge, and pay over to her such sums as should be left after it was all settled.

"But the percentage is an item which I can not afford to lose," said Mrs. Coville. "I can do

the business myself, and save more for my children."

"But you ought not to undertake it. It is not a woman's place," insisted Mr. Cramer.

This rebuff so dismayed the sad-hearted woman that she had no courage to seek further for help. But Rachel Elmer herself found out several of their own church-members, and presented the case.

"You know," she said to Mr. Hunting, "that Mrs. Coville is a great manager; she has uncommon ability and great business capacity. I'd sooner trust her than half the men who pretend to be great financiers. If it were a *man* of *ordinary* business talents who asked this of you, you would not refuse."

Mr. Hunting was well aware that Miss Elmer knew that he *had* often lent his name to business men, so he could not plead that it was not his custom; he could only smile blandly and ask to be excused.

"Certainly, as you choose; but if you can not do this much for a sister in Christ, what are covenant vows worth? You are a rich man; the little that Mrs. Coville possesses would be as

nothing to you, even if there were any risk. But good-morning."

Miss Rachel was not discouraged. The next man she met was Mr. Betson; he, a man of the world, was ready to put to shame this Christian man, and the way out of Mrs. Coville's troubles was shortened. Meantime Mr. Bates had been thinking. Mrs. Coville's burdens were heavy. Could he help her? He *had* done much. Was more required of him? He knew of her present strait; should *he* step forward with an offer of help? What of the application of the Golden Rule to this case? What if it were his wife and his children? And, too, he knew that his wife, dear, loving, sympathizing little creature that she was, had not one-half the business capacity that Mrs. Coville possessed. In his heart he knew that the risk was almost nominal; but he had never done such a thing, and had made it a settled principle never to do it, and had promised his wife. But, then, this was a peculiar case. Perhaps he had better talk it over with Charlotte. She had spoken particularly of that sermon — what if, after all, it should bring forth fruit in this way? Suppose it was his own sister?

But that was different. Was it? Are we not all one family in Christ Jesus? Are we not bound to do and care for each other in times of need? Have not these a right to expect, and seek not only our sympathy but our aid? What would Christ have done? Was this his opportunity to fulfill the law of love? Why should he do this thing? There were richer men than he in the neighborhood — men more accustomed to taking such responsibilities. Very well, will you let another take the reward? “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” It was strange that this opportunity of burden-bearing should have come so closely upon the holding up of that command. Was it? or was it that the mind, having been quickened upon the subject, the case seemed to have unusual prominence? Were not such opportunities, or, rather, similar ones, presenting themselves every day? Does not the Father, in giving us the place of children in his family, give us with it, almost daily, privileges of exercising a self-sacrificing love, of doing a self-forgetting work for him? Mr. Bates revolved these and other thoughts in his mind, and finally he said:

“Charlotte, if I do this in the name of the

Lord Jesus, then shall the blessing of God be upon it."

Thus helped by one and another, Mrs. Coville took up her burden of living once more. It was curious how many found opportunities for this burden-bearing for the sake of Jesus Christ. Through that long winter in her first struggle alone with the world Mrs. Coville felt the way smoother by the many little kindnesses of her *brothers* and *sisters*.

And how Robert Niles and Helen Betson found their opportunities we must leave for another chapter.





CHAPTER VI.

HELEN'S OPPORTUNITIES.

"AND SO FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST."



HE cold snap that had shriveled people and plants alike, and set everybody to grumbling, was over; the early morn had melted away; overcoats and water-proofs were hung back in the closets, and smiles and cheerful tones had taken the place of frowns and discontent, and dear, delightful Indian summer had come to bless the earth. Sweet old age of the year! So near the last, and how bright and tranquil! Dull, dreary November holds in keeping for us those few bright days — bright

though not clear; a haze hangs over the hills and fills the valleys, softening the picture of leafless trees and brown bare fields.

The wise grown-up people are finishing all their odd out-of-door jobs, while the younger ones are drinking in as much as possible of the brightness and beauty of the season. The children tumbled in the drifts of fallen leaves, pelt-ing each other with scarlet berries or brown nuts. Almost every one was out of doors enjoying the sunshine. It seemed wrong to lose a bit of it. But Helen Betson was very busy; she did not leave her desk at morning recess, though her seat-mate and friend, Flora Niles, said :

“Do, Helen, do come out. It is such a bright day it will do you good.”

“I can’t; at least I would rather not. Christmas will be here before I am ready for it; so I must improve the minutes;” and the shining crochet-hook slipped in and out through the meshes of scarlet wool.

“Well, if you won’t come, you won’t,” and Flora ran away.

The school-room was almost deserted. Only Helen and Jenny Vosburgh were left. Jenny

was bending over her slate with wrinkles of perplexity in her forehead ; she was not quick at figures, and these algebra lessons were her daily trial. Helen, watching, saw her write her equation, transpose, multiply, divide and reduce again and again, erasing and going over the work repeatedly. It was almost time for the bell, when suddenly Jenny pushed away her slate and dropped her head upon her arms with a despairing exclamation. Someway Helen felt that it was that thirteenth example which was troubling Jenny ; she remembered how it bothered *her*, and how a hint or two from Tom had set her right. Should she go and help Jenny ? It would not be any violation of rules to give to Jenny the same kind of help that Tom had given her. But her work ! She had denied herself the pleasure of going out for the sake of her mat. She really had not time ; she did not often get her own lessons ahead so as to gain a little time for fancy work. Jenny would get along someway. It wouldn't be such a dreadful thing if she did fail ; it wouldn't be the first time. Her tear-stained face had too often told the story of imperfect recitations, and Professor

Graves' consequent displeasure, for nothing so tried the Professor's patience as a failure in a mathematical recitation.

"But Jenny Vosburgh is not my friend *particularly*. I don't know why I should help her," Helen argued with herself. "I can't help all the girls that have trouble with their lessons." "And because you can not relieve all the sorrow in the world you refuse to help any," said the better self that was trying to get uppermost. "But I can't spend time. If I do it to-day I'll have to do the same thing to-morrow, and so on and on. What a bother!"

Helen sat by a window that faced the street, and looking out she saw Mr. Ried going up the walk. He stopped to chat with Flora and the other girls, and Helen wished that she had gone out — a word from the pastor was worth a great deal to the young people.

"I like Mr. Ried," she said to herself. "What a good sermon that was he gave us yesterday morning. I wonder —" Here the sound of Jenny's pencil, as she renewed her perplexing study, brought Helen back to the thought that there was a burdened brain. "Bear ye one

another's burdens." "Is this my *opportunity*?"

"Jenny, what is the trouble? You look sober enough to match an owl."

"I don't seem to match him in wisdom if I do in sober expression; though I never *could* understand why owls were made the emblem of wisdom. Anyway, I wish I had one here to help me through this horrid equation," said Jenny, half crying.

"I am not an owl, neither am I wise as they are said to be; but perhaps I can help you" said Helen, going over to Jenny's desk. "Oh, it is that one! I remember *that*. Tom helped me. The puzzle is —" Here a few quick strokes of the pencil, a suggestion or two as to signs, and Jenny's face brightened with the sudden illumination of her mind, and Helen went back to her work.

It was a little thing. Well, perhaps so; but so is an acorn dropped in the earth. Little things are not to be despised. A cup of cold water is a little thing, yet what saith the Master of so small a thing done in his name? But really, this was quite a bit of self-denial on Helen's part. In the first place, she had laid out just as

much work us she could accomplish before Christmas by employing every spare minute, and she grudged every speck of the day, outside lesson hours, given to other employments. Then she hated *bother* ; she was naturally inclined to be selfish in that one respect ; putting herself out of the way for other people was not a part of her creed ; and, besides, she had no patience with dull people. Quick herself to see into things, always perfect in recitations, it seemed to her to be quite useless to try to help a dull scholar. There always would be some to drag along in a class ; and if you undertook to help them they were sure not to know anything about what they had gone over, and the rules might as well be written in Greek for all the good such scholars got out of them. Still, it was worth something to Helen to see the bright face of Jenny Vosburgh, as an hour later she stood before the blackboard working out with quick, ready hand that same thirteenth example, to the astonishment of better scholars in the class, who for once had failed ; and Helen was glad of this opportunity to bear another's burdens.

But other opportunities were coming to her.

It was that same afternoon. At recess there had been a little commotion among the girls; a few of them stood chatting upon the doorstep; presently Minnie Gates joined the group, when instantly a hush came over them; one or two of the more lofty turned away; Flora Niles fell to studying her history which she had in her hand. Helen sat upon the topmost step with her interminable crocheting; she had been too much occupied with counting stitches to join in the conversation, but now she noticed the silence, and looking up she saw the tears gathering in Minnie's eyes. Minnie Gates was carrying a burden heavy for a young heart. Hers had been a happy home until a year ago, when suddenly all its brightness went out. The whole community was shocked at the discovery that Mr. Gates had been concerned in the bank defalcation, by which so many had suffered, and the family were sunk to the depths of wretchedness. The guilty man fled, and mother and daughter were left to breast the storm as best they could. Minnie would say: "Mother, I could bear the hard work and the sacrifice of all our nice

things, if it were not for the disgrace ; but that is too hard."

Then Mrs. Gates would moan and bewail their hard fate, until Minnie learned to bear her burden of slights and scornful looks without complaining. The school-girls did not mean to be unkind ; at least some of them did not. There were those to whom Minnie's poverty was far more than her father's crime, and there were others, who, like Flora Niles, turned with a painful feeling away from the daughter of a *forg*er. Neither Flora nor Helen had known much of the girl ; but Helen's father had been one of the heavy losers, and naturally Minnie shrank from the daughter of one whom her father had wronged ; and Helen herself had never felt called upon to trouble herself about her school-mate in any way. But, to-day the sad, pleading face haunted her. After the bell rang and they all went in to their books, she kept thinking about her, and the result of that thinking came out after school. As Minnie went down the street alone, as usual, Helen joined her, saying :

"I am going up Court street to-night. What a lovely day this is. Haven't you enjoyed it ?

I just feel like singing. But, dear me, the cold weather will soon be here to stay."

"Yes," returned Minnie, almost too surprised to speak, "and I dread it. I used to love the winter; but—it is different now."

"Well, I suppose we ought to make the most of these days," replied Helen. "I'll tell you what we will do—if the pleasant weather lasts until Saturday, we will go to the woods, a lot of us girls, and have one more good time this year. Won't we?"

Minnie was surprised into a look of pleasure, and an exclamation of—

"Oh, delightful. I have not been to the woods this fall, and I want to get some mold for my geraniums."

"Do you keep plants?" asked Helen.

"Only a few *now*."

"I have two lovely rose-bushes just alike. I'd like to have you take one of them. They are very thrifty—none of your hot-house forced plants. I'll get Tom to bring one around if you'd like it?"

"Oh, thank you. I had a tea-rose, but it faded away and died."

Minnie spoke sadly, as if rose-bushes were not the only things that had faded away and died.

"Are you going into the Ancient History class?" asked Helen.

"No—I think not. I could take it up as well as not, only—" Minnie hesitated, and the quick color mounted to her face.

"I knew the other girls of your class in United States History were going to take it up. Professor Graves makes it very interesting," said Helen, who was one year in advance of Minnie in the school course.

"Well," said Minnie, with a frankness which Helen's pleasant, cordial manner called forth, "to tell the truth, I cannot afford to buy a book. They are quite expensive, you remember."

Helen Betson was visibly embarrassed, and her companion wondered if her reference to their parents had brought up afresh to Helen's mind its cause, and if this was why the color mounted to *her* cheeks and forehead. Helen had been ready to give away her rose-bush; but her beloved school-books, she had a habit of treasuring them carefully. She could never endure to lend them; and when she had said, "Good-night" to

Minnie and gone home, she went straight to the little book-case and looked them over. There they were, from the little First Reader up to her geometry and Latin grammar, a graduated row. Should she take out the history and break the line?

“How foolish I am,” she reasoned. “But I can’t help it. It seems as if these books were a part of me. If I had any money — I mean if it were not so near Christmas, I would buy a new one for Minnie; and that wouldn’t do, either; it would seem more like charity. It is real selfish of me. Minnie isn’t to blame for her father’s villainy; and she is such a splendid scholar, it is a pity that she shouldn’t go on with the class. Poor child! I suppose life is a burden to her at the best, and I don’t think we girls have any of us helped to lighten it as we might. Well, I will do this much, anyway.” And this is the note that Tom took around to Mrs. Gates’ door:

DEAR MINNIE: — I find that my old history is almost as good as new. Will you take it and go on with the class? I shall be so glad to have

you. I have no younger sisters to use it, you know; so you can keep it from molding.

Lovingly,

HELEN.

It was a little thing to walk home with a schoolmate, and lend her an old, half-worn book. So it was; but much grew out of it. First, Minnie carried home a lighter heart; then there was a talk that Helen had with Flora Niles and Clara Hunting, out of which grew kindly attentions toward the lonely girl on the part of these leaders, and thus the way was smoothed, and the *law of Christ fulfilled*.





CHAPTER VII.

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."



ROBERT Niles found his opportunities. That Monday morning he called at the parsonage; he had a communication from his mother to Mrs. Ried. Mrs. Niles did not hear the sermon, but it may be that the thoughts awakened by Flora's report of it had worked out this result. Anyway, Robert was the bearer of a note which ran thus:

DEAR MRS. RIED: — Will you send over that work basket which Flora saw in your room the

other day? My hands are not used to idleness, and it will be a favor if you will furnish the work for a little time. Don't refuse me.

Sincerely, EMMA NILES.

Robert waited in the little sitting-room, listening, meantime, to restless footsteps overhead. Steps which he knew to be those of the pastor, and he said to himself: "Mr. Ried is troubled; I know by the walk. I wonder if it is anything I can help." To Mrs. Ried:

"How is Mr. Ried this morning?"

"Oh, he is quite tired out. I think he is overworked. He made a great many calls last week, and with those two funerals and the regular Sabbath preparations, he is quite used up. Won't you walk up to the study? I think he would like to see you."

In that half hour Mr. Niles gained some new ideas as to his pastor's needs, and as to ways in which his people might bear his burdens. And as for the pastor, that restless walk had ceased, and as he turned to take up his work again, its tangled threads had somehow straightened, and its pattern had grown brighter and less complex.

And yet there had been no word of complaint or hint of an overworked and burdened brain, on the one hand, and no formal or sentimental utterances of sympathy on the other — such things were unlike these strong-hearted men. But there was the mingling of that under-current of earnestness and unity of purpose which both felt, though unexpressed.

It was at the next Thursday evening meeting that Mr. Ried, after alluding to the deep religious feeling abroad in the community, said :

“I am weighed down with the burden of souls. An overpowering sense of responsibility has fallen upon me ! Who will share the work ? Who will come to the help of the Lord against the host of sin ?”

Robert Niles came to his feet with a ready response.

“It seems to me,” he said, “that the text from which our pastor preached last Sabbath morning is far-reaching enough to cover this ground — that we should not let him bear the burden of souls alone. We ought certainly to feel an anxiety for the salvation of others. We are none of us free from responsibility in this matter.

But this thought has come to me with force, that when the burden rests with an unusual pressure upon the heart of God's appointed servant, ought we not to be ready to stand by him with our prayers, with our most earnest efforts, upholding and assisting him in every possible way to the furtherance of the cause of Christ. To be practical, what shall we do? Let us relieve him from all necessity or worldly cares; then let us join him in personal labor for others — praying more continually and more earnestly for the upbuilding of the kingdom. Let us seek for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost that we may be strengthened in the faith, and be enabled to carry the burdens of others, as we are commanded. Our pastor has a heavy burden of pastoral work. We ought to help in that. Though we shrink from it, it may be our duty to seek out men and press home the claims of the Christian religion. It may be our duty to go from house to house carrying the warnings and the invitations — yes, and the *promises* of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr. Niles did not consider his duty done with these words of exhortation. The next morning

a boy left an envelope at the door of the parsonage, containing fifty dollars in bank bills, with only a line :

“Perhaps the enclosed may lift a burden.

Yours in Christ.”

And his words re-echoed in other hearts, and the pastor rejoiced in the kindly remembrances of his people. But better still was the increased earnestness and eagerness with which they drank in the words of life, the readiness with which they responded to his call for volunteers to engage in active work. If he had doubted the acceptability of his labor, he could do so no longer ; and, mutually encouraged and strengthened, pastor and people were moving forward to meet boldly the enemies of Christ.

The next Sabbath morning Mr. Niles was making a last study of the Sunday-school lesson—not as you may perhaps imagine, with commentaries spread out before him, nor with the *HERALD AND PRESBYTER* even. The *helps* had been laid aside, after careful study in days before, and now, with Bible and note-book only, he was gathering up his thoughts for the business of teaching.

A message — a queer message it was — was brought in. It was a crumbled and soiled bit of paper, and in a hand that Robert Niles afterward remembered as showing signs of culture, was scrawled :

“For the love of Christ help a poor wretch, without home, friends, or character.”

The boy who brought this note, without date or signature, said :

“It’s a man down to the station-house, what father took up last night, and I tell ye he’s a hard un to look at, he is ! ”

“What does he want of me,” asked Robert, wonderingly.

“Dunno. ’Spect he wants some clothes and things. He’s awful hard up, I guess.”

“Yes, no doubt,” returned Mr. Niles, “but why does he send to me ? ”

“Dunno,” said the boy again. “’Spect as how father told him on you, ’cause I heard the old man — that’s father I mean — say he saw you give a man a dollar ’cause he hadn’t any fingers on his right hand, so he couldn’t saw brackets no more. He thinks a sight of you, father does, and I heard that fellow down there

say that if he could only start right on'ct, he would go it all slick and smooth ; and so I kinder think old dad told him maybe as how you'd be the chap as would give him a lift."

Robert laughed a little at the boy's rigmarole, and then he reflected. A glance at the note — "for the love of Christ," that decided him — he could not turn away from that appeal. He would see what it meant.

A short brisk walk brought him to the station-house, and there he found the forlorn specimen of humanity who had appealed to him for help.

"Well, my friend, can I do anything for you?"

The man looked up, and seemed to be taking his measure, though he said nothing.

"You seem to be in a little trouble ; what can I do for you?" repeated Robert Niles. "I believe you sent for me."

"Yes, the keeper here said you'd be the one to do me a good turn if anybody would. The truth is, I've sunken very low, and having gone to the bottom I want to start upward again. If I could, someway, get a little lift in the beginning, I almost think I could climb up myself."

Mr. Niles looked at him. He was not a

pleasant-looking object to look at, not a very encouraging subject for practical benevolent operations. His clothes were ragged and dirty, his hair long and uncombed, while his countenance bore the marks of dissipation.

“You think I don’t look very much like climbing. Well, I can’t blame you for that look of disgust that your face wears ; but let me tell you, young man, that the Master, whom you profess to follow, sat with the lowest. I used to be his follower, too.”

This, in a tone so sad and so helpless, that Robert was touched. He sat down beside that wretched man, and said, kindly :

“Tell me about it. How came you here, and what do you wish me to do ?”

It was a long story. His name was William Walters ; he was a German by birth, educated at a German university, had been in the Crimean war, and later in our war of the rebellion ; he had been in almost every country upon the face of the globe. His mother had taught him to pray, and he really seemed to have known something of experimental religion, but in his wanderings he had fallen into sin, and here he was

an inmate of the station-house, without a penny, and, as he said, without a character; but, seemingly, desirous of forsaking sin, and taking up a new life. Said he:

"I came in here last night, and soon after I picked up this little paper. And, do you know, it really seemed as if it were my very self that was pictured there, and I saw and hated my folly as I never did before. And now do you think that I could reform? But what's the use, I'm sure I can not."

"Oh, yes! you can, certainly." Then Robert Niles spoke words of cheer — words that seemed for a moment to raise the spirits of the dejected man, then he sank back.

"It's no use; I have been the slave of strong drink so long that I have no power left to resist the tempter."

"There's strength in Christ," replied Robert.

"Not for me."

"Yes, for *you* — for me and for you. Come, go with me. I'll find you a place where you will be free from temptation for the present."

"No, I can't go; I've no claim upon you."

"But you must let me help you; you sent for

me, you remember. Besides, I am seeking to do the will of Jesus Christ, and you know that he always stretched out a helping hand."

"But it is of no use."

"You will grow stronger soon, and until you do you may depend upon me to help you."

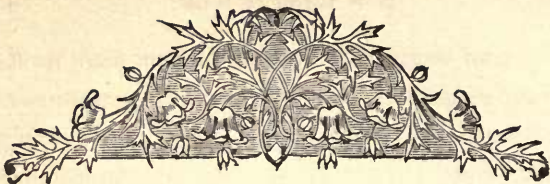
Finally, the stranger was persuaded to go with his new friend, who took him first to his own home, where he fitted him out with decent clothes, then he left him in the "stranger's room." In the evening he took him to church. The next day he found him a comfortable room, and employed him about the store for a few days, until he could find work more suited to his capacity. And all winter he went back and forth with this stranger that he might lead him safely past the glittering saloons.

It was a hard struggle for William Walters, but with the help of his friend he gained victories, and day by day grew in strength; and gradually he leaned less and less heavily upon Robert Niles, and trusting in Christ's power to keep him from falling, he began to stand firmly by himself.

But oh, how many, many times did that faith-

ful friend carry the burden of that soul to the throne of grace! He brought him sometimes to talk with Mrs. Niles; he spent whole evenings in the homely little room at the boarding-house, seeking in every way to uphold and encourage the weak and erring brother. Happy for both was the day when they could feel assured that the reformation was complete. Then they felt that the watching and the striving, and all the weight of care and anxiety, had not been borne in vain.





CHAPTER VIII.

A DINNER-TABLE TALK.

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

JOHAN, will you take some of Clara’s mince-pie?” asked Mr. Norton Graves, addressing the Professor, who was making a holiday of Saturday by spending it with his brother.

“Yes, thank you. That is,” turning towards the smiling hostess, “I suppose there’s no brandy in it?”

“Not a drop!” was the ready response.

“No,” said Norton, “Clara has shut down upon everything of that sort. She is a convert to Mr. Ried’s theories. For my part I should

like him better if he were a little more liberal in some of his views. But that is always the way, people go to such extremes. Dr. Thornton says that when they were in college together Ried was as wild as any of the boys. (You know what that means.) I'll warrant he was not afraid of brandy pies then."

"Yes, I have heard it all," said the Professor; "and I have also heard that he had a great shock in the death of his brother, brother-in-law, or some near relative, who was killed by the recklessness of a drunken coachman, and that he has ever since been a strong prohibitionist. I was glad to hear him come out so boldly last Sabbath. A great many have been wondering what stand he would take; but he left no room for speculation on this point. His position was fully defined."

"Well," returned the brother, "for my own part I was sorry. I don't think he has any call to touch upon what properly belongs to political speakers. Ministers have nothing to do with legislation and law, nor with the subjects belonging to these departments."

The Professor smiled.

"You would narrowly circumscribe the duties

of the ministerial office, and make the range of subjects from which a minister may choose very narrow."

"How so?"

"Why, murder, theft, slander, perjury, fraud, and a host of wickedness besides, have been made subjects of legislation. Of course the minister of the gospel has no business to preach against any of *these* sins. The political men, the lawyers, will take care of all such matters. Strange if a pastor may not warn his flock, especially the young, against the beginnings of falsehood, because there is a law against the extreme of that sin. He may not warn against the habit of backbiting and evil-speaking, because the law provides a penalty in the case of the slanderer. He may not caution that boy against taking the advantage of his schoolmate in that knife trade, because lawyers look after the cases of defaulters."

"Now, John, you know you are talking nonsense!" said Norton, laughing.

"Am I? I don't see how you make that out. If a pastor *may* warn his people against these sins for which the law provides a penalty,

and if he may warn against those heart-sins with which human law does not deal, why may he not preach against that which gives occasion for so much discipline in the Church of Christ, which so hinders the success of the gospel which they present? It is you who talk nonsense. The truth is, ministers and Christian men have left it to political men too long. If this liquor traffic be an evil, then let's have warnings rung out from every pulpit in the land."

"Well, I don't like such a thing just before election," said Mr. Norton Graves. "I don't like the phrase, '*Electioneering sermon.*'"

The Professor laughed this time.

"Well, if you don't like it, why use it," *I* should never think of giving Mr. Ried's sermon that designation. It does not apply in the least."

"Well, that is what the rabble call it," returned his brother.

"The *rabble!* Seems to me, Norton, you are suddenly very sensitive to the opinions of the rabble. If a lot of ruffians had planned to steal into your house and do you an injury, you would not mind the opinions of the rabble when Mr. Ried made an outcry, though you might think

he was overstepping the circumscribed limits of his sphere if he interfered and gave you a note of warning," with which bit of sarcasm the Professor pushed his empty plate from him, and rested his folded arms upon the edge of the table. The hostess smiled, for she understood what that meant. It was a trick of the Professor when he had made up his mind that there was a great deal to be said, and that the time had come for saying it.

"See here, Norton, you are a temperance man."

"Yes ; but I am not a *fanatic*."

"Thank you for the implication. If by a *fanatic* you mean one in *dead earnest*, I am a fanatic, and I do not consider it an uncomplimentary appellation. As I was saying, you must see that there is great need of direct legislation against the traffic in intoxicating drinks. The temperance people have reasoned, remonstrated and persuaded ; and in spite of reason or remonstrance the traffic goes on. The dealers will not be persuaded to abandon a money-making business. The consumers will not be persuaded to break away from that which holds them by the power of appetite. And if we do

succeed in helping now and then one to break the fetters, there is the fresh recruit for the army of drunkards to fill his place."

"Of course, John, I acknowledge the need of legislation, but you go to such lengths."

"Yes, there is a difference in our ideas of right legislation on this subject. You assume that our acknowledged evil — one which, if let alone, would spread ruin and desolation throughout the land — should be *restricted*. I ask that it should be *prohibited*. You would limit its power; I would destroy it altogether. Think of a law restricting and regulating theft, or frauds! It is the duty of a Christian people to remove evil from their midst, not to protect it."

"But," said Mr. Norton Graves, "I doubt if we have the right to destroy the business entirely."

"Well, if you consider that we have laws upon our statute books prohibiting nuisances, and forbidding such uses of private property as shall be to the injury of our neighbor; and when you consider how much greater a nuisance is this liquor business than any you find mentioned, and how much greater the injury inflicted by it,

I think you will scarcely say we have no right in this case. Surely, if we may prohibit the lesser, we may the greater."

"Well, John, I did not know that you were such an ardent advocate of the prohibition system," said the brother.

"I don't think I was ever so decided until lately. I see now that there is no middle course."

The conversation was protracted, and there were two or three eager listeners. There was Lydia Elmer, who had pitched upon this Saturday to visit her old friend Clara Graves. These two had not outgrown their girlish intimacy, and this was the one house where Lydia paid frequent visits. Now, with glowing eyes and burning cheeks, she took in every word of this talk of the brothers. The echo of Mr. Ried's words reached her ear and kindled an interest, and as the talk went on, her friend joining, and Robert Niles, who was also present, putting in a word now and then, plans of working were suggested, and though Lydia said nothing, great resolves were taking shape in her heart. And, too, Robert Niles found that his zeal was being kindled into a fresh flame, and he carried some of it

out to the Clarkson neighborhood ; and the few words he dropped there awakening an intense interest, to his utter astonishment he found himself besieged for a regular speech upon the following evening. His friend, Newton Clark, looked on, listened and smiled, thinking " what a good day it was for the Clarkson neighborhood when I hit upon Bob for the place ! "

But perhaps the strongest impression was made upon a fourteen-year-old boy who sat a silent listener during the dinner hour, or *after dinner* hour. He was a nephew of the Graves Brothers, who was a favorite with both uncles ; but the boy liked better the lively, genial ways of Uncle Norton, the more serious manner of the other being less to his taste. But to-day, listening with eager, boyish interest to the discussion of great principles, he said at last within himself, " I declare, I do believe Uncle John is right. When I am old enough I'll vote the way he does. But, dear me," he added, " it will all be over by that time. Slavery is used up, and now if they go and finish up this liquor business, what will be left for us boys to fight for when we are men ? — that's what *I'd* like to

know." And from that hour Frank Thornton set his face resolutely toward the point to which all true Christian men are now looking, determined to be in the front of the battle, only fearing that it would be "over and done."

"I don't think there is much accomplished by that kind of preaching," remarked Mr. Hunting, as he walked home from church that Sabbath morning.

Well, *perhaps* not.

"I, too, have my doubts as to the good results of *that* sermon," responded Mr. Graham.

So had Mr. Ried; but he was content to leave results with Him whose gospel he preached. And could Messrs. Graham and Hunting, and Mr. Ried himself, have heard its echoing and re-echoing in the hearts and voices of some of the congregation, they might have thought differently as to the practical results. "For thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that."



CHAPTER IX.

GOING FORWARD.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”



PROFESSOR Graves walked up Court street at a quicker pace than was usual with him. After the close of the afternoon session he had sauntered down to the post-office, chatting with some of the boys, who were fond of the grave man, who seemed to understand them, sometimes better even than they understood themselves. The evening mail brought him a letter which surprised and perplexed him considerably, and now he was hurrying home to consider its proposition. It ran like this :

DER MISTER PROFESSOR GRAVES:—I've ben thinkin' as how sumthing had orter to be dun down here. We are under a hevvy yok. From the winder of mi hous is 14 rum-shops. I mean places where the wicked stuff is sold and delt out to men, women and children; and broils and fites is a goin' on evry nite. Now I want sum of you Christian folks up there in the village to cum down here and help pray away the curse. I read as how the women out in Ohio drove the rum-sellers all out with their prayers, and I'se been praying ever since; but it's kinder discouragin' when one ignorant woman is fightin' all alone agin such a mighty host. I remember as how David went out alone to fight the giant. But then, you know, he had a great army behind him, and I kinder thinks that sorter gin him courag. My man, he's the wust of 'em all; but Satan went out uv him the other night just long enuf to let him promis that I mite hav a meetin' here — and he never breaks a promis; so if you will come, I promis you a clean floor and a bit of a stool to sit on. I hearn as how you talked good like in the boys' meetin', so I

makes bold to ask you to cum and help us pray away the devil. Next Frida nite, at Tim Harley's. Your obejint sarvent,

MARY HARLEY.

Taking into account the paper, the spelling and the penmanship, with the style of composition, this was altogether the most unique specimen of letter-writing that the Professor had ever seen; but he scarcely gave these details a thought just then. The request was such a strange one — Tim Harley's! How well he knew the place! It was down by the depot, a little around the corner. Just a few days previous he had been called to a neighboring town upon business, and returning by a late train he swung himself from the platform, and by way of a short cut passed around that same corner. From one of the miserable tenement houses issued the most horrible, brutal profanity he had ever heard and through the curtainless window Professor Graves saw a sight that made his blood boil. It was the old, oft-rehearsed scene. The drunken husband and father, bereft of every spark of reason, making a brutal attack upon

wife and children ; and the Professor hurried on, not caring to linger, and not daring to enter alone and defenceless. Hailing a policeman, he was told that "it was nothing ; that thing was always going on ; supposed they were used to it ; ought to be by this time." And that man was Tim Harley — and now he was asked to conduct a service in that drunkard's den ! It was a presumptuous idea. Why, his life would not be safe. What was a drunken man's promise worth ! Of course he could not think of granting Mrs. Harley's request. It did seem as if something ought to be done ; but *how* and *who* ? Surely not himself. Could he take his nice notions of propriety and decorum, his fastidious tastes and delicate perceptions, down to that Five Points of this young city ! This was not the way he put it, of course ; but it was, nevertheless, true that Professor Graves had fastidious tastes and fine notions about many things. Didn't Mrs. Lane, with whom he boarded, know *that* ! For was he not proud of his two or three rare pictures, and did he not insist upon certain arrangements in his room which very much disturbed that lady, all so that those

pictures might hang in a good light? And did she not buy a bread-slicer because the Professor one day smiled at the unevenly cut slices? and didn't he always appear in shining linen and broad-cloth upon which no speck of dust dared rest. Oh, the Professor was very *particular*, and very fond of order and system. It did not seem possible that *he* could be called upon to go into that dark, dingy quarter, and mix with those miserable wretches. Finally he went to see Mr. Ried.

"Well, Professor," said the pastor, with a gleam of light in his face, when he had read the queer letter. "I think this comes in answer to my prayer. I have had my thoughts directed toward that part of the city for some time, and I could find no way of getting in there. Now the Lord has opened the door —"

"A narrow door, I must say," said the Professor, a little gloomily.

"Even a crack would answer to put in a lever," returned Mr. Ried. "Now I'll tell you what to do; just take Mr. Niles and two or three more and go down there. Don't open a meeting by reading a chapter of the Bible, nor even by prayer, or, rather, sing a prayer. In

fact I would sing most of the praying. There are some good voices among these people. I heard some in this same Harley's shop one day. But you'll know how to do it. It shall be given you what to say. Shall we carry the matter to the Master, and ask him *what* and *how*? ”

Still Professor Graves doubted.

“I do not see my way clear in this,” he said.

“I suppose that was about what Jonah said,” returned Mr. Ried, “but none the less is it true that he was sent by the Lord. My dear brother, I think we do not *often* see the way clear very far ahead. If you and I are sure that it is the word of the Lord, that should suffice for us. I suppose that we might all do more and better work if we questioned less.”

“Yes, I have no doubt of it,” said Professor Graves. “We profess to walk by faith, yet we are very anxious to take long strides ahead. There is not much faith about it when we are determined to see things for ourselves.”

“There has always been a fascination in the story of the passage of the Red Sea,” said the Professor. “To think of that mighty host coming down to the very edge of the water, in obe-

dience to the command, 'Go forward,' knowing not how God was to work their salvation, nevertheless obeying and going forward."

"And will every brother 'go forward?'" asked the pastor.

"Unquestioning!" answered the Professor.

This was the close of a long conversation full of plans and suggestions, and now the Professor went out, strengthened for his work.

It might have been a month later when, meeting Lydia Elmer at his brother's house, Professor Graves said :

"Miss Elmer are you a very busy woman?"

"Indeed I am," she replied, promptly.

The gentleman looked somewhat doubtful, and she went on.

"Why shouldn't I be a busy woman, I'd ask? Since Rachel opened her school and made such a hobby of it, all the housekeeping falls upon me, and, besides, I have to help bundle up the little midgets when it rains, kiss their fingers when they come in half-frozen, and look after their interests and other people's affairs generally."

"Well," said the Professor, "if you are such a busy person, you are exactly the one to lay

more work upon. The people who have leisure are the ones who will not part with it. I'd never ask men or women with nothing to do to break in upon their habit of do-nothingism — but those who are just overwhelmed with work are the very ones who can always do a little more."

"But what *are* you coming at?" said Lydia, slightly impatient.

"I'll come to it at once," returned the gentleman, "only let me first tell how my idea originated," and hereupon he proceeded to show her his remarkable letter, and to give an account of his work in that uncongenial quarter, telling of that first evening, in the low, dark room where Tim Harley lived; of Tim Harley himself, who, completely overcome by liquor, lay in the corner, utterly unconscious that hymns were being sung and prayers being offered. There were, perhaps, a dozen persons present at that first meeting. Since then they have been down every week, and he was growing really interested; and now for his scheme, which was to open an evening school. Lydia laughed a little at first, and said within herself, "What a Quixotic scheme;"

but as he unfolded his plans she grew interested and was ready to promise her assistance.

"Of course we need some teachers," he went on. "Can you manage to give two evenings a week? Those girls need to be taught everything, I should judge."

Of course Lydia fell in with his ideas, though she kept saying to herself, "What an absurd thing to do. I declare, the people are taking up *ideas*. I believe it is Mr. Ried. He is as full of new-fangled notions as he well can be." A vacant room in the neighborhood having been secured, and fitted up very simply and roughly with seats and desks, the evening school opened with about twenty girls and boys as pupils. And such a time as there was trying to organize! The girls were given over into Lydia Elmer's care, and she soon found that it was true — they needed to be taught everything. She was prepared with basted work, and as soon as she could bring them into anything like order she gave them a sewing lesson. Such a motley group as they were. Some had made very commendable efforts at *fixing up*; others came in all their filth and rags, but there they were, a dozen immortal

souls, with just this one opportunity of learning about God and heaven, of the way to please the one and gain the other. When Lydia Elmer went home after that first evening's work I think she felt a sense of responsibility, such as she had never carried before ; and the prayer she offered that night came nearer true prayer than any she had uttered for years. It was a pleading for a measure of wisdom to be given her for a fitness for the work.

She had entered upon the work because the Professor had inspired her with some of his own enthusiasm, but now the work had entered into her, had awakened her so thoroughly that she was not likely to sleep again. Life was never more to be a sameness and a weariness to Lydia Elmer. A dozen new interests had sprung into existence in the persons of those wild, unrestrained girls. For the advancement of their interests she labored and studied and prayed. Meanwhile the pastor, in his study, thanked God that one by one his people were coming to the front.



CHAPTER X.

HELEN GETS AHEAD.

“CHARITY SUFFERETH LONG, AND IS KIND.”



I CAN not put up with this sort of management much longer ! ”

Mr. Robert Niles spoke more excitedly than accorded with his usual manner ; evidently something exasperated him to an unusual degree. To his mother’s softly put question he replied in a slightly modified voice ; people were apt to use a softer tone when conversing with Mrs. Niles.

“ What is it ? ” she asked.

“ Oh, it is only Ryle ; But I really am tried almost beyond endurance ; he pays no sort of at-

tention to any of my suggestions, and sets at defiance all the ordinary rules of courtesy, to say nothing of the terms of our agreement."

"Why do you not expostulate with him?" asked Mrs. Niles.

"Expostulate! As if I had not done that until I fairly dread to speak to him of our business relations."

"Why, is he inclined to be quarrelsome?"

"Oh, no; he is either provokingly indifferent or just about to do whatever is suggested; then he goes off and does nothing at all."

"What does Mr. Smith say?" asked Mrs. Niles.

"That is the worst of the whole business. His patience has given out, and he declared that if Ryle did not withdraw he would. Of course he won't do that; but if I would consent he would drive Ryle out of the concern before to-morrow night."

The business firm of "Smith & Ryle" had been principally "Smith" until Mr. Robert Niles came home and threw his energies and considerable money into the concern, which was now "Smith & Niles," Mr. Ryle having by some un-

fortunate private speculation exhausted his own means as well as some of his partner's, was glad to retire to a subordinate position in the firm upon the admission of a new element in the person of Mr. Niles. Mr. Ryle's business capacities might have been good but for one unfortunate characteristic—a want of diligent application stamped *failure* upon everything he undertook, and it was this fault which so vexed the soul of our friend Robert Niles. Just now the spring elections were approaching, and Mr. Ryle was a candidate for a somewhat lucrative office in the gift of the people, and, like the mass of office-seekers, was being swallowed in a vortex of political scheming. Business suffered even more than usual, and, as we have seen, the patience of both senior partners had given out.

Flora Niles had listened to the conversation of her mother and brother for some time without speaking, until Robert, in illustrating his causes of vexation, mentioned some rather aggravating circumstances, then she burst out:

“I declare Rob, I would not put up with such things! It is a perfect shame! I just

wonder that you will let things go on so. I know I wouldn't."

Mrs. Niles smiled at the outburst.

"My little girl has yet to learn that there are better ways of doing things than just throwing overboard the things that vex us. Sometimes it may be our duty to carry our burden for a time; out of the patient bearing of a burden may grow some good to ourselves or others."

"But people can't expect other folks to go dragging them through the world while they pull the other way, and if I were in Bob's place I wouldn't try to help folks that won't help themselves."

"But, Flora," said her brother, turning to look full in the face of the household darling, but not like the mother, smiling at the indignant protests she had been uttering — he was too thoroughly vexed and tried to smile — "but, Flora, what would he do? He has no other dependence."

"Well, if you can afford to do his work, and your own too, and give him the benefit all the same as if he did it, why, go ahead. I've no more breath to spare in commiseration."

Miss Flora turned to "that horrid geometry" with an air that said: "There, sir, I have given you my best. Don't expect anything further from me."

Mr. Niles sat looking into the fire, wearing a perplexed and thoughtful expression. As he rose to put on his overcoat before going to the store, he said:

"Well, I don't know of any way except to get clear of the fellow as soon as we can without making a great stir."

Flora looked up quickly, and her face betrayed just a gleam of the thought, "Just what I said."

Matters at the store went on very badly all that week. The senior partner growled every time he met Robert Niles, and that gentleman felt himself growing desperate over the way things were going, or rather the way they were not going.

Saturday night, with its promise of rest, came as a welcome respite, and with his vexations put as far as possible from him, Mr. Niles went through the Sabbath as usual. He had grown into a habit of wondering what Mr. Ried would have for him, or what he should be able to draw

out of the sermon for himself. As we all know, we are apt to find what we look for, so our friend was always sure of his lesson. To-day he found it in these words: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind." The lesson of brotherly love was pressed home to the hearts of the people. The question, How long ought we to suffer evil at the hands of others, and how far ought we to resist the evil that others would do unto us? was well discussed, and it is certain that at least one man who listened concluded that he had been wanting in that charity that "suffereth long," and, furthermore, had he been always kind?

Mr. Ryle was his brother in the Church. Was he being true to his covenant vows? Ought he not to bear with the infirmities of the weak one? Who would, if not himself? How did he know but that his own example of steady, persistent application to business might not in time have its effect upon the weaker brother? Anyway, would it not be well to bear a little longer?

They were simple thoughts that were brought out of this familiar text, illustrated and enforced by the teachings and example of Christ. They did not startle by their novelty, but by their

very simplicity and homeliness reached by a direct line the heart which sought the truth — seeking to know and to do the will of Christ.

“Well, Flora,” said Robert, as the two walked home together, “I suppose you are ready with a practical application of the sermon?”

“Well, guess I’ll have to give in, as they say, on the Mr. Ryle question; but, to tell the truth, Rob, I think Mr. Ried does hit pretty close. I couldn’t help wondering if he could know of some things that have happened at school lately. Of course he couldn’t; but all the same the sermon fitted closely.”

“Did it?” asked the brother, smiling. “Tell me about it.”

“Oh, there isn’t much to tell; only Helen and I have been so vexed! Helen has been just as kind as she could be to Jenny Vosburgh, and the hateful ——” Flora caught Robert’s look, and checked herself. “Well, I suppose I may say she has been treating Helen unkindly, and I have tried to persuade Helen to drop her entirely.”

“Well,” said Robert, as Flora paused, “sup-

pose you should drop her, as you call it, what of it?"

"Why, you know that we — why, Helen and I — well, Rob, you see that we rather lead the rest."

Again Flora caught a queer look, that caused her to hesitate and flounder, and stop altogether.

Robert laughed. "Charity vaunteth not itself," he repeated.

"Oh, you do catch a body up so," she said, half vexed.

"Well?" Robert waited for the rest of Flora's story, but it did not seem to be coming.

"Well?" he repeated.

"I shan't tell you any more," she answered. "I don't approve of evil speaking."

Robert did not mind losing the rest, knowing as he did that Flora had made her application as well as himself.

Helen was waiting at the gate, stopping a moment only for a word of greeting. Robert passed on, leaving the two girls together, suspecting that they had something to say to each other.

Flora swung her muff by the chords, and

"wondered if it would rain." Helen "didn't know; she hoped not."

Then suddenly Flora said:

"What about Jenny Vosburgh?"

"I wonder if you've been thinking about her, too!" said Helen, looking up with a beaming face.

"Yes, I was almost sure that Mr. Ried knew about things at school," returned Flora. "Of course he didn't, but I felt the hit all the same."

"So did I." Helen's words were uttered with a touch of sorrow in them, and she added: "Flora, we must be more patient with Jenny; perhaps we may win her love even yet. As for that, I never cared for her love until to-day."

Flora looked a little surprised. "Well," she said, "you have got farther than I have if you have got to that point. I can't say that I am longing for Jenny Vosburgh's love. She isn't quite to my taste, but I do feel condemned about her. Of course you and I ought to be above minding such things."

Here Flora caught a look on Helen's face that brought back Robert's slowly repeated sentence, "Charity vaunteth not itself."

"Then we will not object to her joining the Club?" asked Helen.

"I can't, after this morning," returned Flora.

Half an hour later Flora met her brother at the dinner-table.

"Did you and Helen fix it?" he asked with a meaning smile.

"Yes, we did," she answered, "only Helen has reached out way beyond me in her application."

"May I ask how?" said Robert.

"She has gone to the 'hopeth all things.'"

"What conclusion have you come to with regard to Mr. Ryle?" asked Mrs. Niles that Monday morning.

"Just this," was the reply, "to suffer longer and hope for improvement, though my resolve to suffer is stronger than my 'hope' of a change for the better."

"I advise you to go and talk with Helen," said Flora saucily. "She is way ahead of you in that direction, though I am sure I don't know how she got there."

"Helen is growing," said Mrs. Niles, significantly.



CHAPTER XI.

SEVERAL SURPRISED PEOPLE.

“Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” “The hand of the diligent maketh rich.”



HEN Mr. Niles reached the store that morning he found Mr. Ryle at his post. This was quite unusual, at least of late. However, he betrayed nothing of his surprise, unless it betrayed itself in the hearty “good-morning” with which he greeted him, adding :

“You’ve the start of me this morning.”

“Well, yes, a little. I thought I would get these papers righted and send some letters off by the early mail.”

“All right,” answered Robert, cheerily. “And

another thing, aren't we nearly out of bill-heads? "

"Yes. I'll attend to that as I go to the express-office. You remember" (this last in reply to a look of inquiry) "those packages of Allen's; are they to go this morning? "

"To be sure! I had forgotten that!" And for a moment Robert Niles felt as if he had changed places with Mr. Ryle. But, recovering himself, he continued: "And while you are about it, wouldn't it be well to have some letter-heads printed? "

"I think so; and how would this do for the form?" pushing a sheet of paper toward Robert as he spoke.

"That is good," was replied. Then Mr. Niles walked on to his own desk, but presently he returned.

"What about that business of Shepherd's?" he asked.

"Oh, that is all right; I saw Shepherd this morning, and he said return the goods, so I sent Tom over at once for fear he would change his mind."

Mr. Niles once more walked down the length

of the store, this time in an utterly bewildered state of mind. What had come over Mr. Ryle? At this rate the patience and long-suffering in which he had schooled himself would not be brought into use. Perhaps he was disappointed and half vexed that he had been deprived of the opportunity for the exercise of self-denial.

He waited for the arrival of the senior partner, and most thoroughly enjoyed that gentleman's look of surprise at seeing Mr. Ryle busy at work at that hour. Then something prompted him to make another suggestion; perhaps he was desirous of finding out just how wide a range Mr. Ryle's newly-developed interest in business had taken. Anyway, as Mr. Ryle came in, after attending to the business already planned, Robert said:

"I suppose we ought to attend to the renewal of that policy in the Grand Company."

"Yes," was the prompt reply; "I have thought of that, and just now as I came up I met the agent, and made an arrangement to meet him at the office this afternoon. I wanted to consult you about it; I think there should be a reduc-

tion of premium ; the risk is much lessened since the date of the old policy.

Robert Niles was never more astonished in his life. But this was not the end ; it seemed to be a day of marvels, all tending in one direction. Just before noon one of Mr. Ryle's political friends came in. He entered into conversation with him, and presently Mr. Ryle was heard to say :

"I can't go to-day."

"But the matter is urgent."

"So is business," returned Mr. Ryle.

"But this is business," said the other.

"Well, it's not like business that one is pledged to."

"I don't know about that," said the friend.

"Seems to me you are pledged to this."

"I do not consider that I am," said Mr. Ryle.

"To tell the truth, I have done more of that sort of thing in the past than I mean to in the future."

"Well," said the gentleman, "if you back down in this way you may expect to lose the election."

"Very true ; I may lose it, as you say ; and of course I shall regret it ; but it will be more on

account of your disappointment than because of my own loss. To tell the truth, the matter of my success has diminished in importance within twenty-four hours."

"What do you mean?" asked the friend, puzzled and half angry.

Mr. Ryle hesitated.

"I don't know," he said, "that I can explain myself very clearly."

"I should judge not," said the other.

"Well, my friend, you see it has come to seem to me like this: Here's my regular business, something that is permanent and reliable, and I have no right to take my time out of the business any more than as if it were so much money."

"But," urged his friend, "it is very near the election now, and these last few days may turn the scale if we are active."

"It's of no use to urge me," said Mr. Ryle. "I have not time to spare for any more campaign work."

"Of course you will do as you think proper," said the other, coldly. "But it seems hardly fair to your political friends to back down in this fashion."

"I'm not backing down," replied Mr. Ryle. "I simply say that I do not mean to neglect my regular work for the sake of trying to influence men who do not know their own minds."

"But suppose you should be elected after all, what about your business in that case?"

"Of course I should have to make some arrangements to meet the necessity. But that would be very different."

"Well, I must say that this is an unheard of way of conducting a campaign! But if this is to be your course I must bid you good-morning."

Mr. Ryle resumed his pen, a perplexed expression rested upon his face, and he worked nervously. Mr. Niles had been a curious spectator during this interview, and was surprised as well as relieved to see the visitor depart alone. Had he been present at Mrs. Ryle's tea-table that evening his astonishment must have been augmented.

That little lady was a model housekeeper; all the appointments of the house were in excellent taste, and surely an indulgent husband and father would find it hard to deny any reasonable re-

quest, when so much pains was taken to make home a comfortable and happy resting-place.

As Mrs. Ryle passed the puffy biscuit the second time she remarked :

“Laura was in a little while ago to see if we would go to the entertainment to-night.”

Mr. Ryle did not reply immediately, and his wife continued :

“I told her I would send word round after tea.”

Still Mr. Ryle was silent. He was not often guilty of such a piece of rudeness. Mrs. Ryle looked her astonishment.

“Well,” she said, this time just a trifle of impatience giving a spirit to her words that was not unbecoming, so her husband thought, as he smiled back her answer to her — “Well, what word shall I send? I’m not so very anxious to go, but some answer must be sent.”

Now, this meant that she *had been* very anxious to go with her friends until that moment when her husband’s manner had discouraged her.

Mr. Ryle understood this perfectly, and he

sought to make amends for his fault in not replying sooner.

“Well, Anna, I would like to go, but I do not think I can get away from the store this evening. How would it do if you were to go with Laura and her husband?”

“Thank you, but I’m not in the habit of going out with other people’s husbands.”

It must be confessed that Mrs. Ryle’s reply was somewhat tart, and as she was usually of a sweet and sunny temper, this sharpness was the more conspicuous.

“Perhaps I could come round later,” said her husband, mildly.

“Oh, no, I don’t care to go without you.”

“I’m sorry to have you miss it, but, really, Anna, we are very much hurried just now at the store.”

“It’s no matter,” returned the lady, “but this hurry has come on very suddenly, has it not?”

There was a bit of sarcasm in this remark which Mr. Ryle could not but feel, remembering how few evenings he had spent at the store of late.”

“Well,” my dear, he said, “I shall have to

confess that I have been rather negligent of late, and now I shall have to make up for it."

Now, no one could have wondered at, or blamed Mrs. Ryle if she had suggested that his conscientious scruples came at a very inconvenient time. It was queer that when she asked such an unusual favor as an evening's pleasure together he should plead business as an excuse, when she very well knew that he had been going hither and thither almost every evening for weeks, seemingly without a thought of the interference of business. But, growing ashamed of her momentary ill-humor, to her credit be it told, she held her peace.

Two or three days passed before Mr. Niles ceased to be surprised at Mr. Ryle's regular attention to business. Every morning he said to himself, "I wonder how long it will last?"

Every time any of Mr. Ryle's intimates came in he fully expected to see them walking off with their captive, but after a while it came to be quite a matter of course that the two young men should meet at an early hour and work together through the day. Then, after a time, a

friendship sprung up between them which was valuable to both.

Now, we must go back to that Sabbath evening when Robert Niles made such heroic resolves to bear, to suffer long, and to be kind — resolves which, while they did him good in the making by awakening thoughts that never slumbered again, he was never called to put into use. In regard to Mr. Ryle, the change in that gentleman's habits seemed to be radical ; and Robert often wondered how it came about. And as for Mr. Smith, the senior partner, his occupation was gone ; he had nothing to fret about. The two young members of the firm kept everything in such excellent order that there was not room for the shadow of a criticism.

I think that I didn't mention that Mr. Niles thought himself into a severe headache, and did not go to church that Sabbath evening. Perhaps some things which mystified him would have been less puzzling had he listened to Mr. Ried's evening sermon. Yet, as he was not one of those people who are given to fitting the sermon to other folks, it may be that he would have been no wiser had he been there.

But what was more to the point, Mr. Ryle *was* there, and fitted the sermon to *himself*. Mr. Ried chose for his text the words which I have set at the head of this chapter. He aimed to show that a diligent attention to one's business was a Christian duty. Said he: "In the divine ordering of things it becomes necessary for a man to spend a large proportion of his time and strength in providing for the needs of the body. And while we are exhorted not to be unduly anxious about the things that pertain especially to this life, we are constantly enjoined to be diligent, and warned against slothfulness. How shall we 'provide all things honest?' How shall we 'distribute to the necessity of saints, or be given to hospitality?' How shall we 'pay tribute,' or 'render to all their dues,' unless we do with might and energy the things set to us? Do not the very words of the sayings of Christ imply much in this connection? Does not the text, 'we live not by bread alone,' prove that while bread is not sufficient it is indispensable."

Mr. Ried found plenty of Scripture to bear him out in his assertion that a man slothful in business could never prosper; that there is no

such thing as a *lazy* Christian ; the two words do not fit together ; they have no connection. There were some plain home-thrusts which Mr. Ryle felt keenly ; and yet they were put forth with such evident good nature and friendliness that there was no way but to take them home and see if they could be made useful ; at least this is what Mr. Ryle concluded to do. I am not sure of that last. I suspect that the thoughts advanced *followed* him home. Anyway, I am certain that they staid with him and worked out the man's salvation.

And, what if he did lose the election ? As he came to see more clearly he thanked God for the failure. And, by and by, when he had grown stronger and become a power in the world and in the church, people said, "How that man is changed ?" and wondered as to the cause.

And, yet, as Mr. and Mrs. Bates drove home from the Sabbath evening service, that was fraught with such results, the good man said, with sadness in his tones, "It is all very true, but I can't think why Mr. Ried should feel called upon to preach such sermons, when there are so

many in our congregation who are still unconverted?"

"Yes," responded Mrs. Bates, and her tones were, if possible, more sad than her husband's. "Now if, to-night, he had only preached a stirring sermon to the undecided, or something calculated to arouse the thoughtless?"

Well, *what* if he *had*?





CHAPTER XII.

HELEN'S PRONOUNS.

"SEEKETH NOT HER OWN"



ELL, I must say that Mr. Ried is making a close thing of that thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians." This was what Mr. Bates said, and what others thought, after several practical lessons had been drawn from the words of the apostle. "I don't quite understand our pastor," he continued. "Now I have been looking forward to this time with great hopes of a revival in our church, and it does seem as if we needed a different sort of preaching."

"Now, Mr. Bates," said Miss Elmer, "do you

mean to say that there was no religion in that sermon?"

Mr. Bates looked at his neighbor rather curiously. There was always something behind Miss Elmer's questions, as Mr. Bates had come to know, and he had also learned to be cautious in his replies. However, he thought it safe to say:

"Why, certainly not; I would by no means convey such an idea. On the contrary, it is the best kind of religion, practical and quite in keeping with the teachings of Christ himself; but what I am anxious about is to have the truths of the gospel set before the unconverted in a manner calculated to awaken."

"I think I understand you, Mr. Bates," replied Miss Elmer, "but you will, I presume, admit that we need to improve in the practice of these Christian graces which have lately been set before us?"

"Certainly, I am well aware that we are, as a church, quite remiss in many of these duties. I don't mean either to make the church carry my individual shortcomings, so I will acknowledge that I have more than once of late felt the close-

ness of Mr. Ried's remarks. Now just one question more: which will seem likely to be the more successful method, that of leaving the church to go on careless of these things while our pastor tries to convince the world's people that this religion which we exemplify so carelessly is very important to them; or, that of bringing the church up to a higher standard of Christian action, teaching those of us who have already believed how to carry out into everyday living the truths we have accepted, thereby fitting the church for the work whenever the Spirit may visit us. As I understand the matter of which you speak, a revival of religion must be where there is religion to revive; the revival must be in the church, though when once we are revived we may hope for a great ingathering. So you see that I do not perceive that Mr. Ried's present selection of topics is untimely."

"Nor I either," said Mrs. Graves; "for my part, I like these practical sermons, those that come right into the life. I don't think I appreciate what you call doctrinal preaching, but the doctrine of daily duties I can understand. For instance, when Mr. Ried says, 'Clara, you ought

not to fret when the bread sours, for either it is your own fault, or one of those light afflictions that are needful in the way of discipline.' ”

“ Or when he tells you, as he did yesterday, that you make too frequent use of the pronoun ‘ I,’ ” suggested Mr. Graves, mischievously.

“ Yes, that too,” returned Mrs. Graves, emphatically ; “ but I could fit that part to other people,” she added.

“ No doubt ; I believe that you ladies have the knack of fitting things and people,” returned her husband, still teasingly.

“ Well,” said Miss Elmer, “ it seems to me that we may all find something to take to ourselves if we search for it.”

“ Yes, yes, no doubt,” said Mr. Bates, “ only, — well, couldn't we old Christians get on awhile without attention, while the unconverted have the truth brought home to them ? ”

“ Mr. Bates, isn't there to be a business meeting of the church to-morrow evening ? ” It was Lydia Elmer who asked this question, with a mischievous gleam in her eyes.

The Elmers, with Mr. and Mrs. Graves, were spending the evening at Mr. Bates'. Rachel

Elmer and their host had fallen into a somewhat sober talk, with which the others were constantly interfering in a merry way, though with meaning behind their lively talk. They all understood Lydia's allusion to the business meeting, and Mr. Bates laughed good-naturedly, though it was a home thrust.

In his sermon from the text quoted above, Mr. Ried had, in pointing out the ways in which Christians sometimes *seek their own*, referred to the fact that in the secular matters of the church it too often happens that there are those who are unduly tenacious of their own opinions and plans. Now, Mr. Bates, with many remarkably good qualities, had this peculiarity. He was very firm in his convictions that his *own* plans were the best that could be brought forward; and, inasmuch as he had very carefully thought out and thoroughly worked up all the details of a plan for the settlement of the matter that was to come before the church at the business meeting referred to, this thrust of Lydia's was sharper than Lydia herself suspected.

"I dread the meeting to-night," said Robert

Niles, the next morning, speaking to his mother.

“Why?”

“Oh, I am afraid that there will be a stormy time; there is sure to be so many conflicting opinions about the matters to be discussed, and of course somebody will be hurt.”

“I can not see any necessity for that conclusion,” replied Mrs. Niles.

“Why, somebody’s plans will have to be set aside — they will all be sure to have one.”

“And you?”

Mrs. Niles’ tone was peculiar, and her son understood it. He smiled in appreciation as he replied:

“Well, of course I have my own ideas about it, and I confess I can see but one way out of the difficulty.”

“So I supposed.”

“Well, mother, I don’t mean to be obstinate in adhering to my own views, but being fully convinced as I am —”

“As Mr. Bates is, and as Mr. Crawford is, and Professor Graves may be, and a dozen more, each in their own way, what then?”

“Well, I suppose we can’t all be right,” said Robert, still —”

“Seeketh not her own,” quoted Flora, not looking up from her algebra.

That business meeting was without a precedent in the whole history of the Court Street Church. The matters were important, and there was no lack of interest, and no lack of suggestions; but what had become of the tenacity with which such men as Mr. Bates usually held their views? What had become of Robert Niles’ convictions? Were they all swallowed up in that love “that seeketh not her own?” The seeming willingness to give the preference to others that prevailed in the meeting gave courage to one who generally kept his opinions in the back-ground. Old Mr. Bradley was an unpretending man, plain in manner and homely in speech, who, though an officer in the church, seldom advanced any plans in a meeting like the present. He was too modest to push his ideas and too sensitive to risk being utterly ignored; but to-night there seemed to be a chance for him, and as he thought he discovered a fallacy in the reasoning of those who had taken a part

in the discussion, the old man laid before his brethren his views. Actually there had been times when some of those Christian men, overcome by their excited feelings, would have talked down their good Bro. Bradley; he was so old-fashioned in his ideas, they said.

But to-night, actuated by a sentiment that was new, to some of them, at least (experimentally new), they listened with deference, even interest, to the unfolding of the propositions of this unpopular brother; and then, to the surprise of everybody, himself included, Mr. Bates moved that the plan proposed by Bro. Bradley be adopted.

That night Mr. Ried wrote a long letter to his sister, Mrs. Sayles, from which I will copy a few sentences:

“And now, dear Abbie, I think I may say I see signs of better things. My people seem to be awakening to a sense of the importance of being religious, not only on the Sabbath and at the family altar or prayer-meeting, but always and everywhere. There is an increased attention, at least so it seems to me, to the cultivation of the Christian graces, and a growing interest

that prompts to the setting of one's self to the work ; for the making of sacrifices for the truth's sake ; and there may be observed on the part of some of the more thoughtful ones a desire for higher attainments, a diligent seeking to know more of the truth. These indications encourage and lead me to look for the presence of the Spirit in greater power.

"There are several of our younger friends here whom I should like to have you know. The sister of the young Mr. Niles reminds me of my little sister Abbie as she was at sixteen ; that is all I need say of my interest in her ; and her chosen friend, Helen Betson, is a girl of great promise. I am looking to see both of these coming forward to unite with us ; they will be great additions to the future working force of our church.

"I am sure that you would be interested in the work that is going on at our "Harley Mission," as we have come to call it. Souls are being saved down there — saved from sin and degradation in this life — saved through Christ's blood for the life to come. It was a most unpromising field, but Professor Graves, with two or three

helpers, have done nobly in facing the difficulties and overcoming them, or making them work in for the furtherance of their efforts. And is there not a great deal in that sometimes, the forcing of unfavorable circumstances into your own line of planning, or making your plans so that the hindrances may become helps?

“There is a young couple living a mile or two out of town in whom I am much interested — Mr. and Mrs. Graves. The lady is a member of our church, but her husband is not; indeed, he has been something of a scoffer. When I first came here they came quite regularly to church on Sabbath morning, always going home before Sunday-school, and not returning to evening service. But of late they are always down for the second service, and Mrs. Graves frequently comes in for the prayer-meeting Thursday evening. Once or twice her husband has come after her a few minutes before the meeting closed, and has taken a seat by her side. It would have done you good to have seen her face light up the first time that occurred. I fancy that this lady's conscience having been aroused, by what means I know not, and a more consistent living following, her

husband has been brought to wonder at and at length respect that which he had heretofore only scoffed at. And so much being accomplished, may we not hope that he may come into the full light of the truth?

“Pray for us, Abbie, that the Holy Spirit may be with us continually.”

Meantime Helen Betson had been having her thoughts. Now, our friend Helen had one prominent fault; this must be confessed, and I do it with reluctance, as she is a great favorite of mine. Helen would persist in talking a great deal; as Tom said, “she wanted to be heard.” Now Tom was very fond of his sister, but he liked to tease her, and used to say provokingly:

“There now, we’ll listen to the lady Helen, while she gives the pronoun ‘I’ an airing.”

No doubt it was very foolish of Helen to get angry over Tom’s good-natured teasing, but the truth is she used to be very much vexed. I do not suppose she realized at all how disagreeable the habit was, and certainly she had no thought that there could be anything in the Bible which could be brought to bear upon that fault; there-

fore she was considerably startled to hear Mr. Ried say that too frequent use of the pronouns "I" and "my" or "mine" might be counted as a sin; that it is a seeking of one's own that is not a characteristic of that charity which is an essential element of the Christian character; that a monopoly of the conversation and the ostentatious spreading out of one's plans, as well as the persistent pushing forward the same — these were all in some sort a seeking of one's own. These were new thoughts to Helen, and she took them home with her. Indeed, Tom was not likely to let so good an opportunity for teasing Helen pass unimproved, so that, with his recalling of it and the application which her own conscience made, she was not in danger of losing the lesson.

"That is the sixth time Helen has started out with 'I,' and then broken off short," said Tom, as they sat at the breakfast-table the next morning. "Say, is your ladyship about to turn over a new leaf with the resolve to put personal pronouns on it? Let me tell you that you'll find it awfully inconvenient. I wouldn't discard my old friends so unceremoniously; it seems sort o' shabby."

Helen's eyes flashed back an answer, though she spoke no word. Tom rattled on:

"Do you suppose that Mr. Ried could have come across that composition of yours? Fourteen 'I's' was quite a crowd for one page of letter size, wasn't it, father?" continued Tom.

"What are you talking about?" asked Mr. Betson, puzzled.

"Oh, haven't you heard of Helen's wonderful production?" and Tom's eyes twinkled with fun. "You see, Helen had been working a cushion, dotting it all over with gilt beads to brighten it up, and I suppose that gave her an idea. When she read her essay over it seemed rather dull, so she plumped down a lot of capital I's, just to brighten it up—to heighten the effect, you know."

"Well, we all know that Helen is somewhat lavish of the use of that word and its companions," said Mr. Betson, "but I hope she will outgrow the habit."

"Tom," said Helen, two hours later, as they were going to school, "I am really going to turn over a new leaf. I am not going to talk so much. I think it is a bad habit, and I think I will see if I —"

"Six!" said Tom, with the laugh all ready. "My! how they rush after each other!"

"Now, Tom, don't laugh at me. I am in earnest," and all the way to school Helen talked about her resolution.

"What are you laughing at?" she asked, suddenly noticing the look of amusement which Tom's face wore.

"Nothing, only I was wondering when you were to begin."

"Why, I have begun! When I get up I said to myself, I am sure I —"

"Only five of them so far!" interrupted Tom, with a merry laugh. "Well, Sis, we'll have to give that job up; Helen Betson will surely be too much for you."

Did she give up? Convinced of her fault, brought to consider it as marring her Christian character, as likely to hinder her usefulness, was she likely to give up at one failure in her efforts to overcome?



CHAPTER XIII.

“AND PETER.”

“And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.”



THE day was perfect; it was a June day. The most perfect days of all the year surely come to us in June. Old men and women who dared not brave the storms of winter, to whom the March winds and the fitful April weather came with dread of rheumatic pains, these had welcomed this morning bright with sunshine, and with it the thought of again going to the house of God. It was communion day at the Court Street Church, and Helen Betson, with her brother Tom, and Flora Niles, and, perhaps,

a dozen more, came to join themselves to the people of God.

The winter had not passed without a blessing for this people; and Mr. Bates himself had ceased to criticise the preaching; why should he find fault when the presentation of the word had been blessed, and members of his own household had been brought to Christ?

When Tom Betson came to talk with his pastor of his newly-found love, he said:

"It was that first meeting at the school-chapel that put thoughts into my head that I could never get away from."

"May I ask what was the particular circumstance that arrested your attention?"

"Well," said Tom, "in the first place, Professor Graves was so earnest, and his voice sounded so deep, as if the thoughts came from away below everything else, that I could not help thinking that he meant it all; and then Helen! why, Mr. Ried, I was never so startled in all my life. I thought that she had given up her notion of being a Christian, then to hear her say those words! It surprised me so! I could

never find any place to settle down until I found out the secret of it all."

As for Helen herself, that Sabbath was a day of exaltation. She seemed to be living in a world above this; and she thought that she could never again be troubled by the vexations of every-day living. What did all these petty troubles amount to, anyway? What were they when compared with the glory of the overshadowing presence of Christ? Why should one walking through life with a hand held fast in the Saviour's grasp, mind the pebbles in the path? For the time at least she had risen above the mists of doubt, and was dwelling in the purer atmosphere of perfect trust. Would it last, or would the realities of Monday bring her back to the old level where the battle was going on? True, she wanted a part in the warfare. She really meant always to be found where the battle was the fiercest; but it was the warfare outside of which she was dreaming; she fancied that for herself the victory was won, nor thought of the wild conflict yet to come. She would fight against sin in the world, and help on the day of Christ's triumph.

When Mr. Ried said, just at the close of the service: "Now let us in a few words of silent prayer present the desire of our hearts to the Father, that which we most earnestly long for, remembering that the promise is unto us as we abide in Christ, and as his words abide in us. Shall we ask now?"

Helen, bowing her head, lifted up her heart in this wise: "Dear Saviour, I would live to do some work for thee. Hear now my prayer and accept the service I would offer."

She carried home with her the same consciousness of having gained a higher ground than she had ever trod before. Mr. Ried's words of warning as to how they might look for answers to their requests fell unheeded upon her ear, or at least she failed to comprehend him, and long after the words came to her as a ray of light in the darkness.

And Tom! What had been his petition? With humility he prayed: "Dear Saviour, help me to overcome my faults and make me fit to be a minister. And oh! I want most of all to have father and mother know of thy love."

While Helen had vague notions of doing some

great work for Christ, Tom had asked for something specific. He went out of himself and sought for others the gift of God's love. He had not reached that point of joyful exaltation upon which Helen stood, but his feet were firmly fixed upon the rock, and he was less likely to be disturbed by the jostlings of the outside affairs. Tom was quick tempered and sarcastic, and he realized that he had before him a hard fight if he would overcome these besetting sins. Hence his prayer for help.

The answer to Helen's prayer was not to be long delayed; already the messenger to fulfill the request was casting its shadow over that household, though in the hush of the Sabbath none felt it; it was in the gray twilight of the morning that the first chill of the darkening presence was felt.

A hurried step in the hall awoke Helen; then she heard her mother say: "Tom, Tom, you must go quickly for Dr. Vananden! Your father has a fit of some sort; be quick."

Before Mrs. Betson had finished speaking, Tom was hurriedly dressing, saying, "Yes, mother," and then a tap at Helen's door:

“Yes, mother, I hear, and I’m coming.”

That was the beginning; all that day and through days and nights that followed, they watched beside the husband and father; Dr. Vananden had looked grave from the first.

“Overworked,” he said; “this must have been coming on for some months; how has he seemed of late?”

And then Mrs. Betson remembered symptoms of failing health; in themselves so slight that they had passed unnoticed; how strange it seemed to them all now that they had allowed them to pass so! So imminent was the danger, and so fearful were they that every hour might be the last, that neither Helen nor Tom thought of going to school, for several days at least, and when Mr. Betson rallied slightly, so that the doctor said he might linger for a long time, but gave them no encouragement as to recovery, then the subject of school came up.

It was Helen’s last year with Professor Graves, and she was looking forward to Vassar or Holyoke; but of course she could not go away from home at present; and Tom — poor Tom — his way seemed hedged right across! It had all

along been his father's intention to take Tom into business with himself; and this had quite suited Tom, until of late he had come to hope that he might be permitted to serve the Lord by publicly ministering in his name, and only the evening before he had spoken to his father about going to college; Mr. Betson was surprised, and only said:

“Well, Tom, this is quite a new thought. I must consider it; it would suit me better to see you a thorough-going business man; certainly that rather than a third-rate lawyer or minister; but we'll think about it.”

So Tom had slept that night with a hopeful heart; he was almost sure what the decision would be. But next morning changed all that, and when Tom came to think of the matter again, he saw how impossible going to school would be, at least for a long time. Mr. Betson was not a poor man; doubtless he could well have afforded to send both Tom and Helen away to school, for a full collegiate course; but they both felt that while there was the slightest hope that he might rally sufficiently to decide for them, they could not urge their mother to make

such an important move ; even if that question could have been decided, how could they leave their mother with the weight of care that rested upon her ?

“No,” said Tom, talking it over with Helen for the fortieth time, “there is no use in thinking about it, not for me at least ; it may be a little different with you ; father had never made any definite plans for you, and it would not be contrary to any expressed wish of his if you were to go to Vassar to-morrow.”

“I know,” said Helen ; “and more than that, I am sure that he meant to have me go ; you know what he said to Professor Graves about my Latin ?”

“Yes,” and Tom sighed over his own disappointment ; they were walking home from church, one August Sabbath, when this talk took place of which I have given the conclusion. Just here there was a quick step behind them, then alongside, and Mr. Ried’s voice :

“Glad to see you both out. I conclude that your father is no worse to-day ?”

It was Helen who answered : “No, sir ; mother thought him a very little stronger this

morning, and he spoke quite distinctly to me when I carried him his breakfast. But then," she added, sadly, "Dr. Vananden says that he is liable to have another attack like the first, at any time."

"Yes," returned the pastor, "and that makes it the more imperative that we relax not our efforts to draw him within the fold. Your mother told me, yesterday, that she had learned to pray while watching by your father's bedside. With so many of you reaching out for God's blessing, he cannot fail of being drawn into the fold, if only you are faithful."

They were at the gate now, and their pastor only added: "Be of good cheer; remember the promises are sure, and they are *yours*."

But Helen could not remember any that seemed to help her; she was passing through a dark valley; these summer days, in which she had expected to be making her preparations for a year away at school, had been spent so differently; "just wasted," she would sometimes say to herself; if she could have done a share of the nursing, but they had been forced to employ a professional nurse who shared the task with her

mother, so that it was only now and then a little service that Helen was permitted to do ; and she grew weary of the long waiting that seemed so purposeless ; not that it was an idle waiting, her days were filled up with many distasteful duties, duties which her mother had heretofore taken upon herself, but which now fell upon Helen ; every young girl who has been accustomed to take a share of the work of housekeeping will understand just the little vexing things that so tried Helen Betson during these days ; and yet it is these same little things that make up much of the comfort of home, and had it not been for Helen's faithful performance of these same hated duties, Tom and the burdened mother must have missed many comforts. Helen asked in sincerity for some work for Christ, but her ideas of the sort of service she was to render were certainly quite different from the reality ; hence her slowness in finding out that this was really work set to her by the Master ; and was as much a Christian service as was Lydia Elmer's work at the Harley Mission, or Flora Niles' teaching in the Home Sunday-school. It seemed to her that all these months she had done nothing !

Her heart was heavy with reflection; she had done her work patiently and well, but she had not yet learned that the most acceptable service is the unquestionable service; and while she was outwardly quiet, inwardly she rebelled at the circumstances that closed about her.

So that while Tom rejoiced that a part at least of his prayer was answered, when his mother found her way to the cross, Helen saw as yet no answer to her own desire, which she had put into form on that Sabbath. Strange how she could not see how she served in patient waiting!

It was a trying day, that Thursday in the latter part of August; Mrs. Betson was busy all the morning in the invalid's room; the servant had gone to a picnic, so that an unusual amount of work fell to Helen's lot; there was no end to the breakfast dishes; the fire went out; the milk for the custard curdled in the sauce-pan; Tom had one of his old teasing fits on and poked around in Helen's way, saying the most vexing things, upsetting the pie he tried to take from the oven; spattering water over the freshly-ironed clothes on the rack, all the while keeping up a laughing commentary upon things in gen-

eral, and especially upon Helen's "uncomfortableness."

Tom did not see Dr. Vananden's grave face that morning as he came from the room up-stairs, but Helen caught the look of pity and sympathy as she met him in the hall, and understood him when he said, with his hand resting upon her shoulder:

"Dear child! we may not question."

Then it was true? Her father would never get well again! Tom did not seem to realize this; and that morning his unusually merry mood jarred upon Helen, but she could not tell him, so she kept on through the day with the grave face and sad heart which Tom was trying to brighten. It was of no use, and finally he went off and left her to her miserable self. She knew she had "questioned" all along; that she questioned still. She had so wanted to be active in Christ's service! Why was this denied?

For several weeks she had been accustomed to sit with her father for a couple of hours in the afternoon, while the nurse went out for an airing, and Mrs. Betson took her rest on the couch within call. Sometimes she read to him;

at first he wanted to hear the daily paper, but one day the paper could not be found. To Helen's "I'm so sorry! you will miss your reading," Mr. Betson replied:

"Why, Helen, have we nothing else to read?"

"Yes, sir, plenty; I only thought that you cared most for the paper."

"Really, I care the least for that; suppose you begin with the New Testament, and read a chapter every day."

So Helen ministered unto her father in holy things—all unconsciously giving to the words she read a pathos and a meaning that somehow found the way to the heart of the listener. First he was interested in the story, for it must be confessed that he was strangely ignorant of the beautiful details of the history of that "wonderful life."

After a few days he said, as Helen closed the book at the end of the chapter, "Go on." And so she read on, chapter after chapter. Sometimes she heard murmured comments, as "wonderful;" "can this be so?" This afternoon she came to Mark 16. She read:

"And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted;

ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified ; he is risen ; he is not here ; behold the place where they laid him.

“But go your way. Tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.”

“*And Peter !*” This was Mr. Betson’s comment. Again he repeated the word, “*And Peter !*” That was all. Helen finished the chapter, and turning to look at her father saw that he seemed to be sleeping. Laying down her book she sat watching — *and praying* ; forgetting self and her desire to be the instrument whom God should honor, she was never nearer being thus honored. Once or twice the sick man’s lips moved, and his waiting daughter caught the words, “And Peter ;” then again, “But Peter denied him !”

I do not know that the pastor had Helen Betson in his thoughts that evening, but I am sure there is one who had ; and who prompted the thoughts which were presented.

She came out of a sad reverie to hear him — Mr. Ried — say :

“It may not be just what you asked, or sought,

or planned, but it must be the best for you because God has put it into your life, and he makes no mistakes. Will you refuse the patient toil he asks because he hath denied your choice? Are you sure that your chosen task might not have proved too great for your strength? May it not be that the discipline of this strange, unsought work is but a preparation for some greater toil, even your own choice, when you shall have grown to its height? And to you who have been praying for something very near your heart, and who see as yet no signs of an answer, let me say, Look carefully over God's dealings, review the path in which you have been led, and see if more has not been given than has been denied. After all, would you drop out of your life that which has been given you to do or enjoy, just for the chance to *try* your own choice?"

Would she? Would Helen give up the memory of those afternoon readings, and the thrill of joy she felt at her father's evidently growing interest in them, for any plan of her own? And the thought that took hold of her with a firmer grasp was this, that "God makes

no mistakes"—not that she had ever doubted God's all-wise power and knowledge. She knew it all before ; *now* she *felt* it.

Tom had a message for his pastor that evening.

"Father wished me to ask you to call a few minutes on the way home, if convenient," he said, after the meeting closed.

"Certainly I will, with pleasure. Is your father worse?"

"I think not ; but he seemed anxious to see you to-night," said Tom.

Mr. Ried was a little surprised at the request, for, though he had called frequently during Mr. Betson's illness, it was not often that the sick man was inclined to receive him. To-night he was welcomed warmly by both the invalid and his wife.

"I hope we have not troubled you very much," said Mrs. Betson ; "but my husband was so very anxious about it, that I ventured to send for you."

"I wanted to see you," said Mr. Betson, "and to-morrow might be too late. Twenty-five years ago I set out to follow Christ. Like Peter,

I promised to follow whithersoever he should lead ; then, like Peter, I denied my Lord ! And I have been denying him all these years so emphatically that none of you have known that I once professed to be his disciple ! But this afternoon this dear child read to me of the resurrection of Christ ; and as she read, ‘ Go, tell his disciples and Peter,’ it came to me forcibly that Peter had a special message sent to him ; then it seemed to me as if this little girl was the messenger sent to tell me that my Lord had risen, and that I may be forgiven too.”

He spoke slowly and with difficulty, he was so weak and exhausted. But after resting a little he continued :

“ I sent for you, to-night, to ask you to establish an altar unto the Lord in this household. I think that with Tom’s help it can be kept up.”

He looked inquiringly at Tom, who seemed surprised at the proposition, but he answered, promptly :

“ We’ll try.”

“ Yes,” continued Mr. Betson, “ I thought so.” After a pause he added ; “ Perhaps I am wrong, but I want to keep Tom for the little time I

shall stay, and then it may be that he will see the way clear to enter upon a course of study preparatory to the ministry."

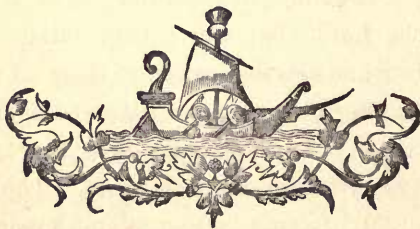
Tom's heart gave a great bound. Was it to be, after all? Then, suddenly recalling the first part of his father's last remark in which he referred to his leaving them as if that event were not far in the future, his heart sank. Had he been blind that he had not seen the shadow growing deeper? All at once something upon which he had leaned was torn away, and he felt himself growing dizzy with the thought that it might be even now very close at hand.

Mr. Ried's voice as he led them in that consecrating prayer was solemn and tender, though there was something of triumph in it as he thanked the Lord that this entire family had been led to make this dedication of their all.

A month later they were all gathered again in the same room. Dr. Vananden was there, and two or three friends and neighbors. The end had come. Mr. Betson had been an honorable man, respected and loved by friends and neighbors. He was kind and generous, ready to help any whose need was brought to his notice; yet

in his last days he counted his life a failure, waste, for he had lived without Christ. Said he: "I have lived more in these last few weeks than in all the years of my life;" and yet these had been weeks of weary helplessness, of slow wasting, and benumbed powers!

And Helen, could she fail to understand the answer? As to what should come next, she had grown content to *be led*.





CHAPTER XIV.

THE END OF A QUARREL.

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”



WAY back in years that were gone there had sprung up between certain members of Court Street Church a dissension that had seriously disturbed the peace and hindered the growth of the church. Like all quarrels, its origin was insignificant; indeed, it is doubtful if any one of the persons implicated could have given an exact account of the cause of the difficulty; but, however small the beginning, the results were by no means trifling. Once or twice the church as a body had taken hold of

the matter, only to find it too unwieldy to be handled by them. It had been handed over to the consideration of a committee in the church, who had handled it with no tender fingers ; then it had been passed over to a committee outside, who, declaring that the scandal ought to die, forthwith proceeded to execute their sentence. But, alas ! that which they meant to be a death-blow failed to touch the vital point, and only served to rouse all the fury of the hunted monster. True, there were times when the outward peace was undisturbed, but all the time there were bitter thoughts rankling in some hearts, scornful or contemptuous sneers on the lips of others, thoughts of revenge growing into shape in the minds of those most aggrieved. It was not a pleasant state of affairs, nor one that promised well for the progress of Christ's kingdom. True, God had not altogether withdrawn from them, as we have seen, the Spirit came among them, and a few were lead to take up the duties of a new life ; and the pastor hoped much from this addition to the working force of the church. But he well knew that with the weight of the old trouble resting upon them they could not

hope to rise to great heights. During the year and a half that he had been with this church he had labored earnestly to get the better of this trouble ; not to get at the bottom of it ; he well knew that an unearthing of all the old horrors would only add to the horrid stench that continually diffused itself through the church. No, indeed, nothing would ever be accomplished by "getting at the bottom of it." Let the people, with one accord, consent to bury the scandal alive so deep that it could never see light again ! That would be the only way to get rid of it ; and in all his private talks, and his pulpit talks, this had been his counsel ; but when did a people who felt themselves outraged and insulted find themselves able to bury the insult and rise above the outrage, until first the spirit of love had taken up its abode in their hearts ?

It was with pain that Mr. Ried learned of the unforgiving spirit that was cherished, and the spite that would now and then manifest itself. In an hour of discouragement he said to his wife :

"Had I known of the extent of this trouble I would never have come here. There is no

chance to work amid such continual drawbacks."

"But, Ralph," replied the more hopeful wife, "I am sure you have much to encourage. Look at the work of Prof. Graves, and the earnestness of Mr. Niles. Think of the stand that the younger ones who have lately joined us have taken — Tom Betson and Will Hunting; and how Helen Betson is growing, and Flora, too."

"Yes," returned Mr. Ried, "I do see how Flora is ripening; and it almost makes me sad. I fear she is getting ready to go from us."

"I have thought of that," said Mrs. Ried, sadly; "yet I do not know that we should be sad at the thought. I know," she continued, "what you mean; but I do not think that even this trouble in the church is beyond the healing power of love; and, Ralph, I will tell you that you may be encouraged to hope for this healing. At our little Saturday afternoon meeting we have made an agreement to pray specially for this very thing, the removal of the accursed quarrel from our midst."

"I hope," said the pastor, smiling, "that you do not mean to pray for the death of any of the

belligerents? You know it has been said that the trouble can never be entirely removed so long as two or three of the leaders live."

"We do not so limit the power of our Lord," replied Mrs. Ried.

"You are right; and will you thank the dear sisters for their lesson of faith? There is one thing which is to me a cause of gratitude in all this — that is, the way in which the church, almost without exception, have stood by their pastor. I have sometimes hoped that through their love for me they might be brought nearer together; but that seems to be a presumptuous hope, for if their love for a common Lord and Master would not in all these years have led them to love each other, the regard for the servant of that Master would scarcely have such influence."

Mrs. Ried smiled.

"But, my dear, why do they love you? Is it not because they see in you a servant of that Master? Is it not because they see in you something of the likeness of Christ? And are not the qualities which call forth their love those which are the fruits of the Spirit? And if your

hope of leading them by a common love to love each other were to be realized, would it not, after all, be the love which is of Christ that would thus bind their hearts together?"

"It seems almost too much to hope," said Mr. Ried; "the men with whom the trouble originated are men of very decided opinions, and it will be hard to convince either of them that they have been in the wrong."

"Is anything too hard for God?" asked Mrs. Ried. "I feel as you do — that we cannot look for a great ingathering while the church is in this state. It seemed as if the blessing that appeared to be so near us, last spring, was largely withheld, because of this thing so displeasing to God, which we cherish in our midst. But we are stronger now in numbers, and I hope in faith; and I confidently expect to see the salvation of the Lord coming to this people."

The pastor smiled and seemed to gather strength from his wife's hopeful mood; and perhaps, too, he gained a text and an inspiration for the next Sabbath morning's sermon. I think that some of those gray-headed men must have overlooked that particular passage in their study

of the word ; and more than one sat uneasily in his place during the listening to the strong, searching questioning of the pastor and the tender, loving appeal with which he closed. "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." This was his theme, and he sought to show how this prominent characteristic of the Christian should be exemplified ; how hatred has no place among the graces ; and how Christians ought to seek to be at peace with all men, and especially should they be at peace with their brethren in the church. And how might this be ? There must always be differences of opinion ; sometimes disputes would arise ; sometimes hard, bitter feelings would find a place in the hearts even of Christ's true followers ; sometimes a positive injury might even be done to a brother — how then ? Might the injured one seek revenge ? Not so ! Rather let him seek to overcome evil with good. "Let it be remembered," said the pastor, "that to seek to retaliate is to be 'overcome of evil' ; that to cherish hard, revengeful thoughts is to be 'overcome of evil' ; that to let your lips utter the bitterness that your heart feels, to let your hand be staid from the

kind act, to refuse the cordial salutation, to leave that brother's name out of your prayers, any one, or all of these, is to be 'overcome of evil.' How shall we overcome evil with good? Ah! the heart overflowing with love needs not to be told this. Does thine enemy hunger? Does he thirst?—supply his wants. It may be that his soul is hungering and thirsting after this love which you withhold. It may be that he would meet you more than half-way; but if not, your duty remains the same; if you would prove your discipleship; if you would have the reward promised to him that overcometh; if you would lighten your heart of a heavy burden, and if you would seek the prosperity of our beloved church, win souls for Christ's kingdom. Then let it become your first endeavor to overcome evil with good. Remember that the first duty is to be reconciled to thy brother, and if your heart is filled with the love of Christ the reconciliation will be easy. But does any one ask, 'Shall a man humble himself to seek to be reconciled to one who, having injured him, yet desires not to be reconciled, who would spurn his advances?' My dear friends, the command is the same; and

remember that he that humbleth himself in the sight of the Lord shall be lifted up. 'Beloved, let us love one another ; for love is of God.'

As the brief, earnest prayer, following the sermon ended, and before Mr. Ried had time to announce the closing hymn, a slight stir arrested his attention as well as that of the congregation. Slowly an old man rose, and all waited to hear what Deacon Barnard had to say. His voice trembled and his frame shook as though he were palsied :

"My dear brethren and sisters," he said, "there is no time like the present, and I want to say a few words now, if you will bear with me. In days past I have been sorely hurt. My patience has been tried sometimes, my counsels have been rejected, and I have been jealous of the rights of others as well as my own ; but from this time I put all behind me and under my feet. There is at this moment no ill-feeling toward any one in the church or out. All that has ever been done or said through all our long-continued trouble I am going to recall no more. And now I would crave the forgiveness of you all. There is only love in my heart. The love

of Christ has, I trust, come in greater fullness than ever before, and driven out all strife and envying. Not even for the wrongs of others have I any resentment. I am an old man—I can not expect to stay here much longer; and I would hope to see this church prosperous and united again before I go. Dear brethren and sisters, let us put behind us all bitterness; let all the old hardness be swallowed up in love. I acknowledge that I have been hard and unforgiving. I have nursed my wrongs—some of them, no doubt, have been fancied wrongs, and the real ones have been magnified—but to-day they all sink into insignificance, swallowed up in the love, the brightness and glory of which removes all darkness. Oh! my friends, if it be true that here we ‘see through a glass darkly,’ and the glimpse we have of the glory of our Saviour’s love is so wondrous, so full of blessedness, what will be the reality when we come to know of the fullness of his love? Dear brethren and sisters, in all sincerity and humility I ask your forgiveness, and I would extend the hand of charity—the token of good will—to all.

Let us love one another, that God may dwell in us and his love be perfected in us."

The old man spoke slowly, his voice trembling with age and choked with feeling. There were many tearful eyes in the congregation, and stern faces softened ; the silence that fell upon them as Deacon Barnard sat down was broken by Professor Graves.

"Let us pray," he said ; and then he led them in a short, earnest appeal to the throne of grace, asking that the spirit of love that had now appeared in their midst might not depart from them, but abide with them, inclining their hearts to still further concessions, and uniting them in every good work and holy endeavor.

As they went out from that morning's service there were many handshakings and murmured words of reconciliation ; many pressed forward to grasp the hand of the old deacon, who had a word of love for each. Meeting Mr. Cramer at the door, he said :

"My brother, we have been in sympathy in this long trouble ; are we in sympathy now ?"

Mr. Cramer did not reply very promptly, and

his hesitancy was rightly interpreted as a dissent.

“Well,” said the old man, “I trust that God will lead us all to a sense of our want. Bro. Cramer, can you carry your hatred into the other world? Oh, let the love of Jesus in, and your ill-will can not stay!”

This was the one theme — the love of Christ! The dear old man had no other thought. “All is swallowed up in his love.” He repeated these words again and again.

Mr. Bates was unusually quiet that Sabbath afternoon. While his wife and the children talked over the surprising events of the morning he was silent. His dinner was almost untasted; he went early to the barn to look after the evening chores. Coming in he said to his son:

“I have harnessed the horse, and you may drive down to church this evening; I am going to walk down early; I want to see the deacon for a few moments.”

At the deacon's it was a word and a prayer. Then Mr. Bates went on to Mr. Cramer's. Here the strong man faltered. These two had, perhaps, been the most obstinate ones of all con-

cerned in the difficulty. How would Mr. Cramer receive his advances? He had witnessed the interview between the deacon and that gentleman, and saw that the heart of the other was not softened. But he had left the old man praying for them; and though he trembled and every nerve quivered, he went in.

“I have come to shake hands,” he said. “Bro. Cramer, will you give me your hand in forgiveness and Christian love?”

Just as the organist softly played the invitation to the evening service a thrill of surprise equal to that of the morning ran through the congregation. Mr. Bates and Mr. Cramer entered the audience room together and took their seats in Deacon Palmer’s pew. What a song of thanksgiving went up from the heart of the pastor as in this act he read the end of their sad difficulty! And the choir proved equal to the occasion; and such a glad hosanna as rang out that evening was not often heard in Court Street Church! There was a ring of gladness in all the service of the evening. There was a glow upon the face of more than one that was new and cheering.

At the close of the service, while the last

hymn was being sung, Dr. Vananden entered at the rear door, and whispered to Mr. Ried, for a moment only. The gladness faded out of the pastor's face, only to return as he listened to the Doctor's communication. As the hymn was ended Dr. Vananden stepped forward and said :


“ Dear friends, I have sad news for you ; sad, yet not unmixed with joy. Our dear old friend, Deacon Barnard, has gone home. Not an hour since I was summoned to his bedside. He was stricken down suddenly, but not surprised. Those of you who heard him this morning need not to be told of his readiness to obey the call. He left a tender, loving farewell for you all. ‘ Tell them,’ he said, ‘ that I die happier for the words I said this morning ; that I would only emphasize them as my parting message.’ When almost gone we caught the whisper, ‘ To him that overcometh ; and again, ‘ The love of Christ.’ Dear friends, let us not mourn. Our old friend's work was done ; this morning's work was the crowning of his long life. Now the Master has called him to be where there is fullness of love. Already he knows what that fullness is.”



CHAPTER XV.

SURPRISES.

“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth, shall ye not know it. I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

WAY back among the hills was heard the re-echoing of that sermon upon forgiveness. Full of the spirit of love which had been revived in his own heart Robert Niles went out to his little Sunday-school in the Clarkson neighborhood. From the first one or two families stood aloof. Three years ago, when the little country school-house where the Sunday-school was held was built, Mr. Tyler, one of the building committee, wanted the desks to face the south, and Mr. Davis thought they ought to

face the west. Both felt that the interests of a nation hung upon the question. Mr. Tyler, having carried his point his children sat with their faces turned toward the tropics ; while the children of Mr. Davis trudged two miles in another direction, not that they might drink in the glories of the western sky, but that their father might thus show his independent spirit ! As on week days so on the Sabbath they were forbidden to set foot within the walls of the new school-house.

Thinking of the neighborhood quarrel, and of the children debarred from all religious privileges by the obstinacy of the parents, and with sadness remembering the gray-haired fathers living without God, Robert Niles determined to make an effort to bring about a change. It seemed a great undertaking ; and the greatest trouble was to find a place to begin ; at least that was the first thought. Then he quickly remembered that the place of prayer must be the beginning of the Christian's undertakings if they would be successful. To seek in the shadow of the cross the wisdom and the strength needed, to plead for the softening influences of the Spirit.

that old antipathies might be swept away and the hearts prepared for the entrance of better thoughts and kinder feelings, was the first step ; then how God smoothed the way !

Mr. Davis had been away from home for a week. His card, stating the time of his return, miscarried, and he arrived in town late in the afternoon, to find no one to meet him. Too late for the stage, and being unwilling to incur the expense of a private conveyance, he started to walk the three miles through the snow. It certainly was not a pleasant prospect, and he grumbled some, keeping a lookout for passing sleighs.

“Can you attend to that business of Baker’s this afternoon ?” asked Mr. Smith, that day, just before dinner, addressing Mr. Niles.

“I suppose I could,” was the reply, “though I would rather not. I was intending to ride out of town, and if I do, I shall have no spare time.”

Mr. Smith looked surprised and the least bit annoyed. Robert Niles was not wont to set aside business for the sake of rides out of town. And the senior partner had a suspicion that

upon this fact the interests of the firm were hinged.

"I had not forgotten Mr. Baker," said Robert; "but it is a matter that does not demand immediate attention."

"And your ride out of town?" queried Mr. Smith, in a slightly bantering tone.

Robert smiled.

"Well, that *might* be postponed; but I have an impression that it ought not to be. And yet I must confess that I have no very definite object or point in view."

At this last frank admission Mr. Smith was still more surprised. It was not like his partner to have no definite plans. What had come over him?

Robert laughed out at the look of disapproval that spread over his friend's face.

"I suppose," he said, "you think I am talking like a silly boy. I mean this; I have an object and a point to gain, and somehow I have an impression that my contemplated drive this afternoon may further that plan; and so I thought to let Mr. Baker wait."

"Oh; well, as for Baker, he can wait, of

course. He said any time this week. But ——”

Mr. Smith hesitated, and Mr. Niles took up the unfinished sentence :

“ ‘ Business first ! ’ I know our motto ; and I know, too, that you are laughing at me for following my ‘ impressions.’ And you and I will hardly be likely to agree as to the source of what we sometimes call a ‘ presentiment.’ But when we have sought for direction, it seems to me that we have the right to expect it.”

Mr. Smith was a Christian, I suppose. He was a church member ; he always sat dignified and stately at the head of his family pew, bowing reverently in prayer, and sometimes joining in the hymns ; giving liberally, and frequently attending the weekly prayer-meeting. He was honest and just, in his own home cordial and hospitable ; but of the warm, loving, sympathetic Christianity that prompted Robert Niles to so many activities, that led him out upon the bleak hill-sides and filled his whole life with a radiant kindness that warmed others and inspired them to reach out and seek to draw others still within the circle of life and joy — of this sort of Christianity Mr. Smith knew little. Hence it was that

he could not understand his junior partner. However, not understanding him he trusted him, both as to integrity and judgment, and seldom criticised his movements; so the young man went in and out, strengthening this one in new and nobler purposes, helping that one to surmount some obstacle in the way of a purer life, stretching out a hand to save the sinking, and speaking words of encouragement to the weary ones who were striving to climb upward. And this afternoon Mr. Smith said nothing further, only smiled upon his more enthusiastic friend, who went his way, sure of some work to do.

Meantime Mr. Davis was wearily climbing the hill. Strange that upon a road so frequented there should be no one going that way with whom he might catch a ride, as is the custom of the country people. But presently his ear caught the welcome sound of sleigh-bells, and in a moment looking back he saw coming around the curve a light sleigh with a single occupant. Drawing up as he was passing, the driver said, in cheery tones:

“Ah, Mr. Davis, will you take a seat here? There is plenty of room.”

Any other time Mr. Davis would have been slow to accept the offer. He was accustomed to class the young man, whom he only knew as the Sabbath-school superintendent, among the "school-house folks," and he held no intercourse with them. But to-night he was too nearly exhausted to decline the offered relief; so, with a scarcely audible "Thank you," he took the vacant place.

It was astonishing how the talk ran on. Mr. Davis had just come from that part of the West which Robert had made his home for three or four years, and this gave them a topic to start off with. The young man succeeded in making himself so agreeable that Mr. Davis quite thawed out before they reached the hill-top, and to his own as well as Mr. Niles' surprise he said:

"You'll come in and warm up a little before you take the ridge side? It's blowing pretty stiff up there."

Robert was quite ready to accept the invitation, which he had been working for; not that he would not have been kind and agreeable had there been no point to be gained — he was always *that*. But doubtless his eagerness to ad-

vance the cause he had undertaken gave an added charm to his manner and an increased force to his conversation.

"Thanks. I will stop a few moments. No, don't call any one; I'll just blanket the horse and let him stand here."

As he reached the door it occurred to Mr. Niles that the home-coming of the head of the household, after a week's absence, might be marred by the presence of a stranger; but it was too late to act upon that reflection, and so warm was the greeting which he received from the lady who met them at the door, that he felt quite at ease, and the thought of being an intruder was quite banished. Mr. Davis was in high spirits and rollicked about the house like a school-boy.

"Say, wife!" he called out, "have you anything for supper? I mean to keep this gentleman; so, if you are short, you'd better set Lolly to work. Give us a feast; now there's a beauty."

The gentle-faced little woman smiled as she replied:

"There's plenty already. Certainly, I sup-

posed your friend would take tea with us, and I sent John to take his horse to the stable."

Robert began his protest. This was more than he looked for, this being taken right into the heart of the family he had dreaded to approach.

"Not a word, now!" said the host. "You see, my wife has taken possession of you. It isn't often that we have any church people among us; so she means to make the most of the honor," and he laughed good-naturedly, tossing one of the children to the ceiling, and then saying: "What has this good-for-nothing been doing since I went away?"

The house was full of children, from the little one in the father's arms up to the half-grown girl and the boy who was almost a man, and it was not difficult for Mr. Niles to fall into a sort of playful, confidential talk with one of the little girls, a talk that naturally drifted to the Sunday-school.

"I want to go awful bad," she said, "but pa won't let us."

But pa *did* let them, fairly surprised into a consent. This much gained, how to win the

father himself became the next question, and it was one not easy of solution. Indeed, the ready consent which had just been given in regard to the children had almost taken away the visitor's breath, and he said to himself: "much being gained, you ought to be willing to wait for the rest." But something prompted him to make one effort, and as he was leaving he said:

"Mr. Davis, I have made you quite a visit. Now, will you return it next Sabbath afternoon? After the school session we are to have a meeting for the older people who do not come to the Sunday-school. Will you be there?" holding out his hand to say good-night as he asked the last question.

Mr. Davis hesitated; he seemed to be searching for words in which to dress his refusal.

"Well," he said, "I ain't one of that sort. I — well, you see — I —" He wasn't getting on very well, and he knew it, too, and the knowledge that he was blundering confused him still more. Finally he blurted out: "Well, I s'pose you know that I hate some of them folks up there? I hain't never set foot inside that school-house."

“Well, my friend,” interrupted Robert, pleasantly, “wouldn’t this be a good occasion for the first time? You see you would be my invited guest for the day—or rather I should say the Lord’s, for we hope for his presence. Will you come?”

Now you remember, when Peter was imprisoned, and prayer was made without ceasing for him, how that, instead of being on the lookout for his coming, his brethren could not believe Rhoda when she told them that he for whom they were even then praying stood at the gate. Their lack of faith always seemed strange, and yet is it not the way we pray? We ask, we plead oftentimes, we even agonize before God, and after all we are overwhelmed with surprise when God answers us, giving us just what we most desired. And now, when in reply to the earnestly put question Mr. Davis said with a laugh, “Well, I s’pose I may as well say I’ll be there, for I see by your eye that you don’t mean to let me off without a promise.” Robert Niles could scarcely believe his *own* sense of hearing. I am sure *he* would not have believed Rhoda!

After he had driven away, Mr. Davis went out

to look after things, and while feeding his horse he began to think it all over. "What a fool I am. Here I've been and promised! Won't Tyler and his set make a stir? I don't see what it is about the fellow, but I declare I believe he could wind me round his little finger like a strip of paper. And wasn't that queer that he told about old Dea. Barnard? The Deacon was dreadfully set in his way. And to think that Bates and Cramér have made up! I remember when that quarrel started; it was when I was getting out that lumber for Cramer's house. Cramer's an awful set man, too. I wonder if Tyler would meet me half-way? Not he; he is as stiff as a mule. Well, I'll go to the meeting, as I promised; but it will be the last. Suppose any of the Tyler set should speak to me? But they won't; they hate me as bad as I hate them; only if they *should* happen to speak, and Mr. Niles should be standing by, I would feel queer to turn my back to them. I wonder if it is true what the old man said, when he was dying, about things seeming so little when a man comes to die? The fellow has succeeded in making me

feel awful uncomfortable. I don't believe I'll go, after all."

I can not tell how many times the disturbed mind of Mr. Davis traveled over the same ground and arrived at the same conclusion. But after all, the next Sabbath afternoon found him at the school-house. Meantime Mr. Niles had made one or two other visits, which were not without effect; and Mr. Davis was surprised, not so much at being met by Mr. Tyler with a hand outstretched as at the words that trembled on his lips.

"Mr. Davis," he said, "I am glad to see you. It is a late acknowledgment, but I will say that you were right and we were wrong in the starting. We could have warmed the room much easier and more uniformly by following out your ideas. Will you accept the acknowledgment and be friends?"

Mr. Davis' sensations at that moment were strange. What could he say, what do, but accept the frank acknowledgment, shake hands and be friends? What did it mean? *He* would never have owned up if he had been convinced that he was wrong!—not a bit of it!—and he

was sure it was not like Mr. Tyler to do so. The explanation came later.

“Will Brother Tyler lead us in prayer?” asked the leader of the meeting.

And then Mr. Tyler’s voice was heard in tender, earnest thanksgiving and pleading. His old enemy sat as one in a maze, and as other voices took up the petition he grew more and more bewildered. Later he rose and said :

“I would like to say a word. Some things that I have heard here to-night have surprised me. I find that things have been going on here of which I knew nothin’. I don’t want you to think that I have any notion of getting religious ; but I will say there seems to me to be something in a religion that leads a man to say, right out, that he has been wrong. You take a man as proud as Jack Tyler here, and there must be some power in the thing, be it religion or something else, that will bring down such a man. I am glad of all that has happened. I must say that it is not pleasant to live on such terms with your neighbors that you can’t speak to them, and are always shutting up their cattle and watching

to see where they make a misstep ; so I am glad to be friends with you all."

A few weeks afterward Mr. Davis came again into the little meeting. This time he said, with trembling voice :

"The first time I came among you I said that I was glad to be at peace with you all ; but I find that is not enough — I need to be at peace with God. I am trying to make my peace with an offended Lord. Pray for me."

Robert Niles was learning to *expect* answers to his prayers.





CHAPTER XVI.

CALLED EARLY.

“I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.”



HOW God was preparing the way for the manifestation of his power! His people were more prayerful; with softened hearts they recalled the last words of their old friend, Deacon Barnard, and were drawn closer together, filled with the glowing warmth of that love which casts out all doubt, and fits the heart for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. They had a growing faith in God's truth, in his power to do for them all that they should ask, and a longing desire to see the salvation of the Lord. It seemed

as if the preaching of the pastor had not died away upon the air, but was still resounding in the hearts and lives of his people.

Would the echoing reach the many hearts that were yet closed and deaf to the call of the Saviour?

Some such question pastor and people were asking themselves, coming together often to pray and counsel with each other.

Meantime the newly-awakened spirit of love was making a sure progress away back upon the hill-side, and every evening in the week the little school-house was crowded with an eager, interested company. At first Robert Niles and his friend Newton Clark led the meetings; but they found that it was indeed God's work. One evening, when both were detained, a young man, who had been led to Christ through Mr. Niles' efforts, proved to have grace for the occasion, and thereafter, though the people from Court Street often went out to join their friends on the hill, it was that they might catch something of that spirit that was so manifestly present in the dim, crowded place. One evening, as they rode home, Mr. Ried said :

"I have been thinking how the work prospers in all our mission fields. Prof. Graves told me this morning that down there at Harley's there are seven or eight who are desirous of leading a different life, and out in the Tanner neighborhood there is an unusual interest, while the work up here is marvelous; and yet, in the home field, we see little fruit. Are we neglecting things there in our zeal for this outside labor?"

"I think not," returned Mr. Niles. "Excuse me, but I think we do see signs of God's favor, and this work on the outskirts may be but the skirmishing with the enemy before the great battle to be fought out at headquarters. I do not think that the influences of the Sabbath before last are going to die away without a greater blessing than we have yet received."

"The reconciliation of those who had so long been enemies is certainly a great blessing, and one to be profoundly grateful for; yet I, too, had looked for one to follow of another sort," said the pastor, a little sadly.

Strange that neither of them thought to con-

nect the work upon the hill with the events of that to-be-remembered Sabbath !

They rode on in silence for a time, a silence which was broken by Mr. Ried, who asked with a tenderness of tone :

“Do you think that Flora is growing weaker ?”

“Yes, in body ; but her spirit grows strong each day. I think she is almost ready to go.”

Robert's voice trembled. The sister who was fading was very dear to them all. They would miss the sunny-faced girl who always had a bright word for everybody ; the invalid mother would miss her ; the brother, to whom she had been growing so companionable, would miss her ; and of the friends outside the family circle, Helen and Tom Betson would miss her perhaps more than any one else. She had been Helen's friend and confidant, and since the childhood days, when Tom had tucked both the little girls closely upon his sled and whirled them down street to school, he had taken care of Flora and made her almost as much his confidant as he did his own sister.

Upon that Sabbath in June when Helen prayed for “some work for Christ,” and Tom

asked for a blessing upon their parents, Flora, sitting beside Helen, prayed :

“ Make me more like thyself, dear Saviour. May I day by day be growing into thy likeness.”

That prayer was surely being answered daily. Those who live in her presence watched the ripening of her character ; and, Robert said, the spirit grew strong in proportion as the body grew weak.

It was three weeks after Deacon Barnard was called home that Flora Niles went to be forever with Christ. These were her oft repeated words, “ To be forever with Christ.”

They had not thought it would be so soon. Dr. Vananden hoped she might live until spring, perhaps even longer ; but a sudden cold seemed to hasten the end, and the prayer was answered, the longing of her soul was “ satisfied,” for she had awakened with *His likeness* !

It was Thursday afternoon when they turned from the little cemetery chapel where they left the darling among the flowers and vines. Many were the tributes offered to her memory as they met at the chapel that evening — tributes offered in homely phrase and in well-made speech :

tributes true and tender; but truer and tenderer than these was the tribute of tears, while nobler and of more worth than any other were those of high resolve and firm purpose to follow Him whom she had followed. Said the pastor:

“The going out of these two from among us so nearly together, one in old age, looking back upon a long life of service, and the other in youth, just beginning the Christian life, leads us to ask, When is there a time that the religion of Christ is not just what we need? The dear old father in Israel found it a good thing to have in that hour, when the messenger came suddenly to call him to meet his God. Can you imagine what that call would have been to that old man had it found him with all the weight of sin, of years of sin, upon him? Would you wish to be one to stand beside the death-bed of a man who had lived and was dying in sin? It has been my sad duty to stand by one such and try to present the truths of the gospel. May I never be called upon to witness another such a death!

“And, friends, the dear young sister who has just gone home found the love of Christ a very precious gift. To her the call did not come sud-

denly, as to our old friend; but none the less did she rejoice that she had made Christ her friend. She gave him her young life, doubtless thinking to live to serve him here, may be for long years, but in accepting her offering it was the Master's will to fit it for his immediate presence. As she saw herself surely descending into the dark valley do you think she was sorry that her soul was safe in the Saviour's keeping? Oh, dear friends, who have not made her Saviour your Saviour, will you take the first step to-night? *Will you?*"

Some were ready to manifest their determination; others carried away thoughts more serious than was their wont.

Mr. Norton Graves put his wife into the sleigh and drove home in absolute silence. Not until his horse was cared for, the doors fastened for the night, the stoves replenished, and he had seated himself in his usual place, did he break the silence. Looking up he caught his wife's anxious look. With an effort he began:

"Clara, ever since that Sabbath when we talked of Mr. Ried's sermon, and you said you were going to begin to obey the command, 'Go

work' — you remember how I laughed at you — I have been fighting against a power that is mightier than I; and to-night I have laid down my arms. I would have spoken down there, only I wanted to tell you first."

In an instant Clara Graves was at her husband's side! What thanksgivings filled the heart of the wife! She, too, remembered that moment of silent prayer.

When Norton Graves' voice was first heard in prayer a strange thrill ran through the lecture-room. The scoffers and unbelievers saw that their ranks were broken, and asked, Who shall be the next to break away? Norton Graves had been one of their most powerful allies, an educated, cultivated gentleman, priding himself upon his integrity, his high moral purposes, yet denying the gospel of Christ. Some one said of him in Rachel Elmer's hearing:

"Norton Graves is an honorable man. He'd scorn to do a mean thing."

"Humph!" was Miss Elmer's expressive response. "Talk about meanness, when a man is doing the meanest thing a man *can* do, denying Christ! His whole life is a meanness!"

Never had he seemed to his wife so grand, so noble, as when he stood up in the chapel to confess Christ; and never had his scoffing friends admired him more.

"Well, my brother, doubly so now," said the Professor, grasping his hand, "God seems to know how to take care of his own work, and is quite able to raise up workers to fill the places of those whom he calls to the new fields."

"What do you mean?" asked the other.

"Just this," replied the Professor: "I have been thinking for some time of taking up the work of a lay evangelist, and to-night it came upon me that you and Clara might possibly carry on some of the work here that I shall be obliged to leave and which seemed to hold me here."

As he said "good-night" the Professor added: "I think I'll come out on Saturday. I have something to talk over with you."

"All right," returned Norton, while Clara smiled, guessing what was the "something."

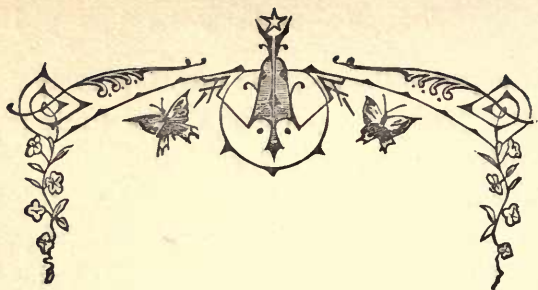
With no small measure was the blessing poured out upon this people, whose hearts were thus prepared for the descent of the Holy Spirit. The faithful preaching, with the honest endeavor

on the part of the people to carry into every-day life the practical application of the truths presented, now brought forth much fruit.

The pastor himself was taking long strides forward, reaching out after those wonderful possibilities presented to the believer. He had evidently entered more fully into that life of endless growth which leads to a development beyond our conception. He had learned anew the secret of victory.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”





CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. MOSHIER IS DISTURBED.

“And Saul yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples.”

LR. and Mrs. Vananden were boarding at Mrs. Crosby's fashionable house, on Park Avenue. It was not because they were enamored of that sort of life, but because of Mrs. Vananden's health having necessitated a change. They had first spent a year in traveling, and then, upon returning, decided to board for a time, that the invalid might be more free from care until her health might be more firmly re-established.

Mrs. Crosby was very particular as to the

standing of those whom she received into her family. To be able to put "No. 9, Park Avenue," upon your cards, was to be assured of your position in certain circles. It gave you the *entree* of the *best society*; it settled the question of your status, mental, moral and fashionable. All this mattered very little to Dr. Vananden. What was more to the point, they found here pleasant, homelike rooms, good fare, and prompt service, with the freedom which his profession demanded.

Mrs. Vananden found pleasant acquaintances and large opportunities. Among the boarders was the widow of Col. Le Grand, who, always stately in bombazine and folds of sheerest muslin, patronized the Doctor's wife, who, all unconscious of the patronage, gave merry, sparkling replies to the measured condescension of the elder lady.

Then there was Mrs. Moshier, bright, sparkling, and witty as Saddle Vananden herself, a great favorite with the gentlemen, of whom there were perhaps a dozen in the house, belonging to the various professions; there were no clerks and no sewing girls who found a home with Mrs. Crosby. Sometimes Mrs. Vananden smiled

within herself at the recollection of her early life, and wondered what Mrs. Le Grand would say if she knew that the lady whom she called "my dear friend, Mrs. Dr. Vananden," had spent busy, hurried days in the kitchen of just such an establishment as Mrs. Crosby's, only a little less pretentious! That she had rolled pie-crust that would have eclipsed any at the Crosby House in whiteness and flakiness! That she had been cook, chambermaid and school-girl by turns! How Mrs. Le Grand would have borne the knowledge that the lady whom she pronounced a model of refinement, culture and grace, had long ago mastered the art of using the broom and duster, and understood the mysteries of the dishpan, Mrs. Vananden often tried to imagine.

"I am afraid you are sailing under false colors," said the Doctor, one day, laughing. "Mrs. Le Grand evidently thinks you a fine lady."

"And am I not?" was the laughing reply. "I know what you mean. I have just ached to see the look of incredulity that would spread over her face, to be followed by an expression of scorn, if she were to hear that my mother kept

just such a house as this — only a great deal nicer."

"Well," said the Doctor, "if you think it would be so interesting, why don't you tell her?"

"Just because I never had an opportunity."

"How is that?" asked the Doctor.

"Why, just think of it! Fancy Mrs. Le Grand allowing the conversation to take a turn that would lead by never so circuitous a route to such a revelation! Why, if I had such a bit of information to impart, I would have to ask for a special interview, and state in set terms that the object of the meeting was to lay before her, for her august consideration, the fact that I once worked for a living!"

The Doctor laughed, saying:

"I should like to be there when my wife makes a set speech."

"Well," said the wife, "I like Mrs. Le Grand, but she is very aristocratic, certainly; and, then, I fear she is not in sympathy with the most of our people on many subjects. I really do not think that she and Mrs. Moshier are exerting the best influence upon the young men here.

You know about the wine supper she gave last Thanksgiving? ”

“ Yes, I remember.”

“ Well, there are a number of things, like that, which don’t seem quite the thing for a Christian woman to do.”

“ I know,” replied the Doctor ; “ but we must remember that Mrs. Le Grand belongs to a generation that held very different views from ours upon many topics ; and I presume that she is perfectly sincere in her Christian profession.”

“ But Mrs. Moshier? ”

“ Judge not.”

“ Do you know that I think Mrs. Moshier is a little afraid of Professor Graves’ keen eyes? Since he came here to board, she is certainly more cautious in her remarks,” said Mrs. Vananden. After a pause, she continued : “ Don’t you think the Professor has changed a good deal? I never thought him particularly active as a Christian worker when we knew him before we went South.”

“ It is true,” replied Dr. Vananden, “ he was not ; and I have noticed the change which you speak of.”

"I am glad that he came here. I used to dread going to the table when you were away. There was so much in the style of conversation which was shockingly irreligious; and it does seem as if they were just a little afraid of you and the Professor."

Of these people, whom the Doctor and his wife were discussing, Mrs. Le Grand and Mrs. Moshier were members of Court Street Church, as were one or two of the gentlemen. But it was true that they were not in sympathy with the pastor and the more spiritually inclined of his people. They were free in their criticisms of Mr. Ried and his measures. One day, when their remarks were unusually severe, little Florette Moshier took it upon herself to administer a rebuke.

"I think it is real impolite of you people to talk about Mr. Ried when he is Mrs. Vananden's own cousin!"

"Mrs. Vananden's cousin!" echoed some one.

"Yes, he *is*! She told me so, didn't you?" appealing to the lady herself.

"Yes, I told you so. But, Florette, do you think that to be one's cousin is to be more than

to be one's pastor?" said Mrs. Vananden, smiling upon the little girl.

"Why, I thought so; but I don't know. Do you mean that, seeing he is my pastor, I may love him as well as if he were my cousin?" asked Florette, while the others were mentally making their own application.

"I think you ought," replied the lady.

Mrs. Moshier's next remark was made in a tone which was a trifle sharper than usual. This was all the notice she condescended to take of Miss Florette's open or Mrs. Vananden's implied reproof.

At the time of Deacon Barnard's death, Mrs. Moshier was absent from the city. Upon her return the fact, with the attendant circumstances, was related to her. Her remarks were highly characteristic.

"Well," she said, "I am glad I was away. It must have been very disagreeable for the congregation; at least, the most of them. I think that a person of cultivated mind and manner always dreads such scenes."

"I assure you, Mrs. Moshier," said Professor Graves, "that it was a very delightful scene,

and the most of us will always be grateful for the privilege of being present."

"Oh, no doubt! I believe that you had a part in the bit of high comedy. Really, Professor, you must excuse me, but those things do seem so much out of place."

"May I ask what things?" said the Professor, gravely.

"Why, you know; it seemed a breaking in upon the good order of the Sabbath services," replied the lady, a trifle embarrassed.

"Yes, I presume they said something like that on the day of Pentecost."

Here one or two gallant young gentlemen came to the aid of their favorite, and, content with the testimony he had borne, Professor Graves did not choose to carry his part of the discussion further.

Presently the talk turned upon the religious interest that had become so general in the community.

"Have you heard Mr. Parks yet?" asked Mr. Lee, addressing Mrs. Moshier, and referring to an evangelist who had come to aid the pastors of

the city in the work which called for additional laborers.

"Oh, dear, yes! You know I always go to the regular Thursday evening service," was the reply.

"May I ask if you liked him?"

"Oh, what he had to say was all well enough; but I think our pastor could have done quite as well," was the careless reply.

"Well," said the young man, "I shall give church a rest until this blows over."

"Oh, no, Mr. Lee, you ought to go to church on Sabbath, certainly," responded Mrs. Moshier, very sweetly.

"That's so, Lee; Mrs. Moshier gives orthodox advice," said Dr. Baumes, from the lower end of the table.

"But I *do*; I always go to church. *You* know that, Mrs. Le Grand. I have missed only two Sabbath mornings since I came here; one of those I was sick, and the other I was lazy."

Mrs. Le Grand, thus appealed to, responded in her usual stately manner:

"I have observed that our friend Mr. Lee is a

very conscientious attendant upon the public services of the sanctuary."

"But," pursued Mr. Lee, "I think that one may be excused for letting up a little on it in these days. For my part, I think the whole proceeding is in very bad taste, Don't you, Mrs. Moshier?"

"I must say," replied that lady, "that I should much prefer to hear my own pastor to-morrow." Mrs. Moshier had suddenly grown very fond of her own pastor!

"I wonder," said Dr. Baumes "that Mr. Ried should have allowed himself to have been drawn into such an arrangement."

"Yet, we read, 'then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul; and it came to pass, a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people.' Now I have never heard what the people said about that arrangement; but I presume there were some to cavil and doubt the propriety."

This from professor Graves.

"Oh, well it was different, then. Now we have our regular pastor, and I do not see the necessity for all this stir."

"Not even that the multitude outside may be saved?" questioned Mr. Graves.

"But think of it!" said Mr. Lee; "the thing is made so repulsive; this man comes here heralded by the newspapers; sends his agent ahead, and while he preaches in one room the agent is busy driving bargains in hymn-books in the anteroom."

"I do not know that we are responsible for the comments of the newspaper men, though I confess my inability to discover anything particularly objectionable in them," responded Dr. Vanden.

"But do you think it is in good taste? I appeal to Mrs. Moshier. Is it not making religion a very common affair? a by-word open to jest? a target for the scoffer?"

Mr. Lee seemed suddenly to have become very jealous of the honor of the faith which he professed — nominally, at least.

The lady to whom he appealed, replied: "These things certainly are not to my taste and may not be to yours, but, perhaps, the newspaper publicity may not be so offensive to others, and *our remarks* might jar upon them. I think that

our better course is to keep quietly on in our usual course, and give others the privilege of following out their own plans."

"But if these plans *should* be of the Lord?" questioned Dr. Vananden.

"I doubt if the Lord has much to do with this flourishing of trumpets," said Mr. Lee.

"Perhaps not," rejoined Mr. Graves; "but he has had to do with trumpets."

"Oh, yes; at Jericho. But it is my opinion that there will have to be louder blowing than any this Parks can do, before the walls of this city will even totter."

"Oh, Mr. Lee, you are getting irreverent!"

Mrs. Moshier's rebuke had a laugh in it, which scarcely added to its effect as a rebuke.

Mr. Lee replied: "Oh, no; I intend no irreverence; but I do not like the way things are being done — this advertising the meetings, and sending an agent ahead, and all that. It is a regular hippodrome way of doing things."

There was a little murmur of dissent on the part of one or two of the set; but the most of them laughed at the remark of Mr. Lee. Mr. Burgess, who was an avowed infidel, said:

"Seems to me, Lee, that you are not 'witnessing for the truth' as your sort say."

"Mr. Lee lets his life witness" said Dr. Baumes.

As Mr. Lee was not remarkable for strict uprightness of life, this remark caused a loud laugh around the table.

"Thanks;" and Mr. Lee bowed in acknowledgment of the bit of sarcasm that sounded like a compliment, though not understood as such; "but I think I am witnessing by my words for the truth as I see it. I am sure that folly and superstition in the Church are legitimate subjects for criticism."

The Doctor's eyes flashed; but he was silent, while his wife, getting roused, spoke quickly; "Then you consider it folly to save souls?"

"That does not follow," returned the gentleman; "it is the measures that I object to. I should not care to be classed among Mr. Parks converts. There is too much notoriety about him."

"Then, when you go to the seaside next summer, if you happen to be in danger of drowning, you wouldn't wish to be saved by Miss Ida

Lewis, because you would be classed among the number whom she has already rescued ; and you would, unconsciously, be adding to her notoriety."

"I should scarcely consider that an illustration that would count much for an argument," was the polite reply of the gentleman.

"Perhaps not ; but it struck me that to be consistent, you should find some way of getting out of the water to correspond with your views upon other questions."

"Oh, Mr. Lee would be sure to keep out of the water unless he was sure of an orthodox 'method' of getting out," said Mr. Burgess.

"Yes, we all know that Mr. Lee is very orthodox." This from Mrs. Moshier.

"But look at it!" resumed Mr. Lee, unwilling to let the subject drop ; "if religion is anything it is a very serious matter ; and the way it is advertised is positively disgusting."

"Then because it is a serious matter it should be kept from the multitude ? The favored few of us who have been blessed with religious training will, of course, hear the announcements of any extra services from the pulpit ; but the masses

whom these workers hope to reach, how are they to be invited, except through the press?"

"Why, my dear Mrs. Vananden, do you not understand that this is just what our friend here objects to—the trying to reach the masses? It is the fact of extra meetings that so vexes his soul."

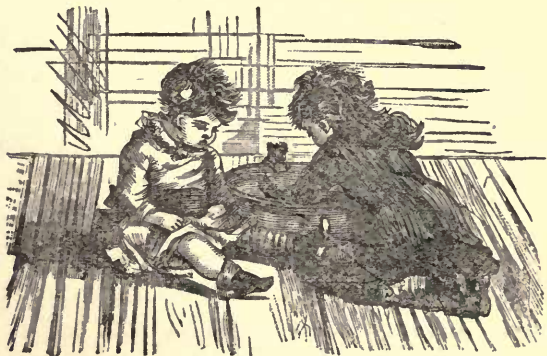
"Now, Dr. Baumes, that is not fair to put it that way; it is this unwarrantable intrusion of a stranger which I dislike. I consider it an imposition upon the taste and common sense of the Christian people."

As they went up stairs after dinner, Professor Graves stopped a few moments in Mrs. Vananden's parlor.

"I scarcely know whether to be more indignant or more sorrowful when I think of those people; to think of professing Christians talking in such a scoffing manner!"

"Well, Professor," said Sadie. "I had no doubt at all; I am just as indignant as I can be every time I hear them talk; I think they outdid themselves to-night. But did you notice that Mr. Kent, usually the worst scoffer among them, was utterly silent?"

Dr. Vananden was getting into his rubbers and overcoat. "Now," he said, winding his scarf about his throat, "I think, Sadie, that I shall not be around in time to go down to church with you, but will join you there; and we must remember that the grace of God is sufficient even for this: to bring these scoffing ones to a sense of their folly and sin."





CHAPTER XVIII.

LEAVING THE RANKS.

“Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?”

THE bell of Court Street Church rang out an invitation for all; its clear tones penetrated the homes of those who never went to church at all. To some of these the old bell, which they had heard hundreds of times, pealing out the same call, seemed to-night to speak to them, saying, “Come!” Some who had never thought of the call being addressed to themselves, almost seemed to hear their own names in the invitation. So surely does the Spirit put a new voice into old familiar sounds! Words

which have been passed unnoticed; pictures which have had no meaning; glances and starting tears which have only excited wonder; into any or all of these the Spirit sometimes puts a power that reaches out and takes hold of men who seem almost beyond reach. And that evening, even on the threshold of a drinking-saloon, the steps of some were stayed, and turned toward home and heaven, by the pleading voice of that church bell.

And yet, Mrs. Moshier, in her daintily-appointed room, heard that bell, and for her it had no message. Ah! *had* it none? or was she one of those who having ears hear not? Mrs. Le Grand, passing her door, which stood open, halted a moment.

“Are you going to church, Mrs. Moshier?”

“Oh, my! no; I might better stay away. I don’t wish to be severe in my criticisms, and if I do not go I shall have less occasion for criticism.”

“Well, if you have no engagement, will you come to my room for an hour? We will have a few games of whist, and Dr. Baumes and Mr. Burgess will join us.”

“That will be pleasant! I will come thank you.”

Mr. Burgess heard the bell in his room, and paused for a moment in his reading. “I suppose,” he thought, “that I might as well go down and hear what that man has to say. I do not fear the effect. My opinions are too firmly established to be easily disturbed, and it may be that he will have something to say that will give subject for thought. They say he is a splendid reasoner.”

Still that bell! “I’ve half a mind to go down a little while. I believe I will.”

He had just risen to put on his coat, when Mrs. Le Grand appeared at his door.

“I came,” she began, in her most agreeable manner, “to ask you to help a lonely old woman to pass away an evening. Will you join Mrs. Moshier and Dr. Baumes in a game of whist?”

Still that bell! But its tone had changed. The call was not nearly so full of pleading. The face of the elegant woman standing in his doorway; the invitation she brought; the prospect of an evening with the fascinating young woman, whose favor all the gentlemen boarders were

anxious to gain; these considerations quite drowned the voice of the Spirit that would have led the listener into the place where the word was being spoken with power.

That very evening, as Dr. Vananden was passing down the hall, he met Mrs. Moshier, and stopping for a little talk, they drifted, as most people did in those days, to the subject that was engrossing attention so largely. In the course of the talk, the doctor said:

“I think, Mrs. Moshier, that you might, or, rather, you *do* have a powerful influence upon the young gentlemen of the house. It is a great power put into your hands; I trust that you may have grace to use it wisely.”

And Mrs. Moshier had only bowed in her most gracious manner and replied, lightly: “Indeed; Dr. Vananden, you greatly overestimate my influence. I do not suppose that my opinion has a feather’s weight with any of them.”

“You are not speaking with your usual candor Mrs. Moshier,” returned the Doctor. “You can not be unaware of the gift which God has given you, by which these friends of ours are

attracted and *held*. So I say, use your power for good."

All this was said so courteously, and the two were so well acquainted, that no offense could possibly be taken. But the Doctor's words lingered with the lady, and somehow the evening seemed unaccountably long and the game unusually dull.

"Where is Dr. Baumes?" asked Mrs. Mo-shier, when Mr. Burgess came in alone.

"Oh! Mrs. Vananden nabbed him and made off with him, before I got around to do Mrs. Le Grand's bidding," replied Mr. Burgess.

"But Mr. Lee will make up the party," said Mrs. Le Grand; and presently Mr. Lee sauntered in. That was Mr. Lee's usual manner of locomotion. He always sauntered along as though the world held no responsibilities for him. The son of a rich father, he had never been called upon to exert himself. His natural abilities had helped him over some hard places, and he had passed around the rest in his lounging way. To-night, in Mrs. Le Grand's handsome private parlor, he was in a hilarious mood. Since the evening when he had taken such a

strong position against the measures of his pastor, he had been growing reckless, frequenting places of amusement, getting up something to fill up the evenings, as if to keep the other young men from the meetings. Now he was planning a sleigh-ride, that should be the grandest thing of the season. "Will to-morrow night do?" he asked, addressing Mrs. Moshier.

"I should not like to join you on Thursday evening," was the reply.

"Why? Oh! I remember; you always go to church on Thursday evenings. But now that there are meetings *every* evening, I don't see why you are required to go on Thursday any more than any other day," said Mr. Burgess.

"I am not responsible for the extra meetings; I do not believe in them; and consider them quite uncalled for. But I do believe in the weekly prayer-meeting, and always make it a rule to go. The innovations of Mr. Ried and this strange gentleman do not affect my duty in the matter."

Now, Mrs. Moshier thought that she was displaying her Christianity to an excellent advantage, and Mr. Lee looked and listened admiringly,

but Mr. Burgess could not fail to see the inconsistency of her way of talking and doing. He didn't believe much in any of it, but he liked to see people up to their profession. That was about what he said to himself, but he said aloud, turning to Mr. Lee and laughing: "Well, Lee, there is an example for you; you belong to the same church. I should think you ought to remember *Thursday* evening."

Mrs. Moshier fancied that she detected a peculiar emphasis upon the "Thursday," but she might have been mistaken.

"Well, then, we will say Friday evening. We will start from the Curtis House at 7 o'clock."

"Why, Lee! you are too audacious. Don't you remember that the Curtis House is next to Court Street Church, and seven is the hour for the meetings. What if Mr. Ried should happen to be going to church just as you are getting started?"

"Well, what of it? I guess if we want to go out to Clarksville and help them with their meetings we can do so," and he laughed wickedly.

"I suppose there is no hope of getting Norton Graves to join us," said Mr. Burgess.

"Dear me ! no. He is hopelessly entangled in the net that Mr. Ried has so skillfully spread. For my part, I believe most emphatically in religion, but I don't believe in fanaticism."

"Well," said Mr. Burgess, "Graves is a good fellow ; I hate to give him up."

"Yes, and now they have got hold of the Doctor ; next you know he will be another fanatic. He is made of just the right stuff."

Mr. Lee said this with a contemptuous tone, adding : "I tell you the best way is to keep away, if you don't want to be drawn in."

Meantime Dr. Baumes sat beside Mrs. Vandanden, listening to Mr. Parks. If the minister had known of his presence, and of the peculiarities of his belief, or rather of his unbelief, he could not have chosen his subject more appropriately. The effect of the sermon upon the skeptical hearer was manifest the next morning. Mr. Lee began the conversation :

"Well, Doctor, you went to hear the great gun last night."

"I did," was the brief reply.

“And how do you like him?”

“So well that I shall hear him again this afternoon, if possible.”

“Whew!” This was Mr. Lee’s expressive response. Mrs. Vananden gave her husband one glance and met his look, which she knew how to interpret. It said: “God be praised.” They felt as did the others, who saw in it no cause for thankfulness, that once interested Dr. Baumes would not rest until he had satisfied himself as to the truth.

Two days later, as they were at breakfast, Mrs. Moshier, laughingly, called upon Dr. Baumes to give them his candid opinion of the meetings.

“My candid opinion is that they are a power for good in this community; that the results can never be summed up here.” He hesitated a moment. Mrs. Vananden leaned forward. He went on, after a brief pause: “Probably it will save me from future embarrassment, and prevent misunderstandings, if I state here, that I am convinced of the truth of Christianity; and, furthermore, I am henceforth an avowed disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Utter silence fell upon the group for half a

minute. Mr. Lee proved equal to the occasion. Rising from the table he passed around to Dr. Baumes' side, and holding out his hand said, with a tremor in his voice: "Doctor, I am very glad to greet you as a brother Christian."

Almost any one else would have said "brother in Christ;" but I doubt if at that time Mr. Lee had any definite ideas of what it is to dwell in Christ, or to have the presence of Christ indwelling in the heart.

He did not resume his seat, but left the room immediately. He did not appear at dinner, and no one knew what had become of him. One of the boarders had been to his office and found it locked. He had not been seen since he left the breakfast-table. He and Mr. Burgess were in the habit of meeting at the same table in a downtown restaurant, for lunch, but he had not been there. Of course his absence was the subject of much comment; some laughingly suggesting one thing and some another.

Mr. and Mrs. Norton Graves, with Lydia Elmer, were stopping at the Crosby House for a few hours. As the Professor and his brother went up-stairs, Mr. Lee met them in the upper

hall. He was pale, and his usual complacency was evidently much disturbed.

"We missed you at dinner," said Professor Graves; "are you not well?"

"Are you going to the meeting to-night?" was the irrelevant response.

"Yes, I intend to. Can I do anything for you?"

Mr. Lee had followed the brothers into the Professor's room, and thrown himself into a sofa corner.

"Well, if you will take me I'll go with you," said he, with a faint laugh. "I suppose you'll think it strange, but I have suddenly grown wonderfully interested in this Mr. Parks. I believe I'll go and hear him."

"Well, are you going without your dinner?" asked Mr. Graves.

"Perhaps I'll get a cup of tea," replied Mr. Lee; "I have not had lunch to-day, but — well, to tell the truth, I did not dare to go to dinner."

In reply to the inquiry which his companions looked, Mr. Lee continued: "It is a rather humiliating confession, but I am afraid of Mrs. Moshier. I have made up my mind to a course

which I mean to follow, and I am certain that she would throw me off the track. She has already lead me farther than I meant to go. I wonder if she realizes the mischief she is doing right here in this house ? ”

“ I am afraid not,” returned the Professor, sadly ; “ but my brother, I am thankful that you are breaking away. Do you mean that you are ready to renew your vows of allegiance to Christ ? ”

“ Just that. I have this day given myself anew to him.”

“ Thank God ! ” The brothers spoke the words in one breath, and Norton grasped the hand of his friend, who added : “ Dr. Baumes’ bold declaration this morning unnerved me. I have shut my ears against the call of that church bell for several days, all the time feeling that it was calling me, and I am not sure that I should have yielded, had it not have been for the Doctor ; and even now, if I were to meet that woman, and listen to one of her slighting speeches about the methods of Mr. Ried and his associate, I am not sure but Satan might get the better of me. Anyway, I don’t want to meet her until I have com-

mitted myself on the other side. It must seem like weakness to you, but I *am* weak."

"Then are you strong," said Professor Graves, fervently.

In the service of song which preceded the sermon, one voice rang out clear and firm, thrilling the hearts of those who recognized it as belonging to Mr. Lee. Especially did he sing with fervor the hymn:


"One more day's work for Jesus;
One less of life for me;
But heaven is nearer,
And Christ is dearer
Than yesterday to me;
His love and light
Fill all my soul to-night."



CHAPTER XIX.

MR. HARLEY SPEAKS.

“ Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.”

MR. T. L. Harley will speak in the lecture-room of this church, this afternoon at three o'clock, upon the subject of temperance, relating something of his own wonderful experience ; telling how God had led him, bringing him up out of a horrible pit into the light of Christ's salvation.”

This simple announcement, made by Rev. Mr. Ried on a Sabbath morning, was very differently received by the different classes of people who heard it.

The winter had slipped away, as all winters will, and summers too. There were many to rejoice with the glad-hearted pastor of Court Street Church, many who had been quickened into newness of life, many who, for the first time, had learned of a Saviour's love ; and there were those who, surrounded by the same gracious influences as these, sitting by their side, listening to the same message, but hearing with unwilling ears, were forced to take up the lamentation, " Jesus of Nazareth has passed by ! " Into some households there had come unity of purpose where before had come that spirit which, while uniting the children of God, makes the distinction marked between those who put Christ first and those who give the world the best of their thoughts and the most of their time.

At the Crosby House Mrs. Moshier still held her sway over the larger part of the boarders, though her power over some of the most devoted of her admirers was broken. Mr. Lee having given himself anew to Christ, Mrs. Moshier sneers at the fanatic, and her expressed " horror " at the astonishingly *poor taste* exhibited by the most successful Christian workers, were insuf-

ficient to move him; and as for Dr. Baumes, Mrs. Moshier declared that he was the worst fanatic of the lot.

"Who is this Mr. T. L. Harley?" asked Mrs. Moshier, as the boarders met at dinner.

"Why! don't you know Mr. Harley?" asked Mr. Burgess, in surprise.

"I do not know that I ever heard of him before this morning," returned the lady. "I judge by your tone that I am betraying an ignorance that is quite astonishing; but you must remember that I have never been familiar with the sort of people that I judge this man to be from Mr. Ried's remark. So, if it is at all worth while to know, you will have to enlighten me on the subject."

"But, surely you have heard of the Harley Mission?"

"Why, yes, that enterprise of trying to civilize those barbarians down by the depot? But you don't mean to say that this T. L. Harley is any connection of the Harleys down there?"

"Why, Mrs. Moshier, how can you be so stupid? And where have you been all these last months that you have not been cognizant of

the progress of the world, and especially of that small corner of it hemmed in by the depot on one side and the river on another? Don't you know that old Tim. Harley has been converted, and the good people who have been assisting in the matter have discovered that his peculiar *forte* is public speaking? The gentleman to whom you are expected to listen this afternoon is none other than old Tim. Harley."

"That old vagabond! What can Mr. Ried be thinking of?"

"You forgot, Mrs. Moshier, that he is no longer a vagabond, if he ever could be classed with such. He has regained his manhood, and though not an elegant speaker, can tell his story simply and effectively."

It was Professor Graves' calm tones that conveyed this explanation to Mrs. Moshier. The Professor's calmness always aggravated that lady, and she answered sharply:

"I beg pardon. I forgot that it was an enterprise in which you were especially interested, this diving down into the scums of earth after treasures."

"You have exactly the right word, Mrs. Mo-

shier," said the Professor. "There is a treasure in every besotted victim of intemperance, and it is a glorious work to redeem and polish the treasure, and fit it to shine a star in heaven; and, my friend, it is a work that the Lord permits us to have a hand in!"

"Oh, I don't object to your preaching temperance to those people, but I really don't want them to set themselves up to preach to me! And I think it is a queer thing for Mr. Ried to do, this holding an extra Sabbath service for the sake of giving Tim. Harley a chance to practice his declamation!"

"Mrs. Moshier, how can you?"

"Oh, now, Professor Graves, don't be shocked. You know I don't approve of a great many things which seem to you very right and proper, and why can't you let me go on holding my own views and saying what I like? You know by this time that I have no sympathy with anything sensational."

"Ah! Well, I suppose that some of Peter's preaching seemed sensational to the Jews; and I remember that very few of them were in sympathy with it."

With this remark the Professor left the table.

"What a very singular man the Professor is," remarked Mrs. Moshier, very complacently. "He has such extreme views. I always had a prejudice against eccentricity."

"Mamma," said Florette, "maybe Professor Graves thinks that you have extreme views. You always seem to be just as far away from his ideas as you can be. Aren't there two extremes to everything?"

"There, Mrs. Moshier, what can you say to that reasoning? Pretty well for Florette," and Mr. Burgess laughed and pulled the long curls which hung over the back of the little girl's chair.

It was a simple, straightforward story that Mr. Harley had to tell. He had been a notorious drunkard until, through the efforts of Mr. Graves, he was induced to take the pledge. That was a happy day for his wife. "Oh," said she, "I have been praying for this these fifteen years. I knew the Lord would hear, and he has, praised be his name!" But that was not all. At the meetings, at what had come to be known as the Harley Mission, among the first to ask the way of life was

Tim. Harley himself; and then, again, said the wife, "I have been praying for *this* these fifteen years. The Lord has heard, praised be his name?"

As Professor Graves sat listening to the well-dressed man who told his story so forcibly, he scarcely realized that it was the same individual who lay beastly *drunk* in a corner of a room the first time he went down to that forsaken quarter in response to the request of Mrs. Harley. And as he reviewed his own labors there, and thought of the wonderful blessings which had come upon those people, he too said, "Praised be his name?"

Said Mr. Harley: "I never knew what it was to be sober, for years. I drank when I got up; I drank before breakfast, and after breakfast; before dinner, and after dinner; before supper, and after supper; when I went to bed; when I had extra work to do, and when I had nothing to do; and, besides, I took a few drinks between times. I drank up a house and lot, a good farm, besides railroad stocks and bonds. I lost the respect of my fellow-men as well as my self-respect. I was more like a brute than a man; aye, I made myself lower than the brutes, for they fulfill the

purpose of their creation: while I— Oh, my friends, I was making a fiend of myself. I drank, and I cursed; I made my home a horrid den of wretchedness; but my dear wife stood by me through all, and by her prayers held me back from destruction. Then God sent me another friend;” and then he went on to tell of the little prayer-meetings, and to relate the wonderful way in which he had been led out of the darkness. Perhaps, if Mrs. Moshier had not been so prejudiced against “extra services,” that she could not be prevailed upon to go to hear Mr. Harley, she might have been convinced that what she sneeringly called a declamation was not devoid of interest, and in no way shocking to *good taste*. There were those who could join in the rejoicing of the angels over one sinner converted to God.

It was about this time that Lydia Graves stood in the doorway of Mrs. Vananden’s parlor, quite early one morning.

“And so you are really going to move?” she asked, watching Mrs. Vananden as she tenderly wrapped Ester’s portrait in many folds of soft paper before transferring it to the man who was assisting her.

"Yes, we are. Come in. The other room is not torn up yet; I think we can find a place to sit down there," and Mrs. Vananden led the way into the back parlor. Continuing: "It is a rather sudden move at last, though we have contemplated it for a long time. On many accounts it is very comfortable here; but there are things that make it almost unendurable at times. Lydia, just think of coming in from prayer-meeting to hear the click of wine-glasses as we pass the doors, which are almost always left open; and then think of being obliged to hear until late at night, often until long after midnight, the jokes and laughter of a card party in the next room, and especially these warm evenings, when the windows as well as doors are to be left open."

"It must be very unpleasant," remarked Lydia.

"But the worst is Sundays. The pain of that is dreadful. At dinner the nature of the conversation is often such, that I positively declare that it would not pain me more to listen to the swearing of the worst pirate crew that ever sailed!"

"Oh, Mrs. Vananden!"

"It is true! I don't know that irreverence

and Sabbath-breaking, or scoffing and blasphemy, are any less a sin or any less shocking when clothed in silk and lace or fine broadcloth. It is so very unpleasant to have to listen to sneers directed towards the cause we love, that we have decided to go where people love and serve the same Saviour." After a moment's pause Mrs. Vananden continued, in a softer tone: "Not that I would unchristian those in the house who profess to love the Saviour. But while their views and practices are so diametrically opposite to our own, upon almost every point connected with Christian life and Christian work, there can be very little sympathy among us."

"But," said Lydia, "it seems to me that they are lacking in common politeness."

"So they are, as I think; but they call us fanatics, and do not reckon our opinions as worthy of consideration," said Mrs. Vananden, laughing a little.

"Well, I supposed that really polite people regarded the religious opinions of others as something to be respected at all events."

"I used to think so, but I find that people's ideas differ as to the ground which the words

‘common politeness’ will cover,” returned Mrs. Vananden.

“What has become of Dr. Baumes?” asked Lydia.

“Why, didn’t you know? He has gone to Nelson. Going to stay. Ralph wrote to Dr. Newland, who is the pastor of the First Church there, and they have put Dr. Baumes right into the harness. Made him superintendent, and I don’t know what. He says in his last letter that he is working out some of the practical things which he has been hearing during the last year or two; hearing and fitting to some one else, but which now seem to fit him exactly.”

“It seems wonderful—he was such a scoffer!”

“Yes; and while I am full of thankfulness for the two of the family here who were led to Christ, I can never feel that I and the other Christians in the house did not, by our inconsistencies, keep others from being drawn under the same influences that led those into the light.”

“Well,” said Lydia, “I must go. When do you mean to get out and *in*?”

“Oh, we expect to get settled by to-morrow evening. Come around and see us in the even-

ing? I'll speak to the Professor, and we'll have a house-warming with two guests!"

"Maybe. How nice, that you can go to Mrs. Betson's and it will be a good thing for her, now that Tom is to be away altogether. But good-bye," and Lydia went down stairs and was joined at the hall-door by Mr. Lee, who was just starting for his office.

"Well," he began, a little sadly, "everybody seems to be on the wing."

"Yourself included?" questioned Lydia.

"Not exactly. Truth to tell, I am halting between two opinions."

"Indeed! I had not supposed you to be one of that sort."

"I confess that I am surprised myself," he answered, laughing. "It is not whether I shall go or stay, though that is involved; but a question lies back of that, which I find it hard to solve. The fact is, Miss Elmer, I have come to one of those dark places that Mr. Ried spoke of last Sunday."

"I suppose that it was dark to the children of Israel, but still the command was to go forward."

“But how is one to know for certain that he is going right?”

“Well,” said Lydia, “you remember what Mr. Ried said about knowing? We have the word of God, the Spirit to lead us, the providences to direct us, the privilege of holding communion with Christ by prayer; and, then, don’t you remember what he said about a person’s doubting what was his duty, when he was not quite willing or quite ready to do it. That struck me as being a very common way of reasoning.”

Mr. Lee smiled.

“I’ll think about that last, and see if I can make it apply. Good-morning.”





CHAPTER XX.

HELEN AND TOM.

“Examine me, O Lord, and prove me.”



I KNOW it, Helen. I'm not doubting your willingness to make the sacrifice; but it does not seem right for me to accept it.”

The Betson family was discussing ways and means, lingering long around the tea-table. Helen's tea was untouched, so eager had she been in her effort to prove that a plan which she had herself proposed was one that they ought to carry out, though it was a plan that would involve a sacrifice on her part.

“I don't understand how you made it seem

any other way than right," returned Helen. "It seems to be not only expedient, but a necessity."

"Not at all, as I look at it," responded Tom; "because I can work my way through."

"Yes, and waste years of your life, the best of them, too," interrupted Helen. "You see, Tom, I don't think there is any special merit in a man's resolve to be independent, and work his own way, when there is no special necessity to go with it. I admire a self-made man; but I don't think that self-making consists entirely in sawing wood and ringing bells, or doing anything of that sort, to pay one's way through college. It seems to me that overcoming your pride, so as to accept graciously your sister's offer, would make quite a piece of a man. Now," she continued, "if that miserable bank hadn't gone and failed, you and I could have gone on with our studies just as papa planned; but as it is, I do not believe that he would have objected to my giving up to you. I know that he was anxious that you should be a minister."

"And so I mean to be; and I shall get along. The Lord will provide a way," said Tom.

Helen smiled as she answered:

“And if, when the way is provided, you turn scornfully away and say, ‘That is not quite according to my ideas,’ do you expect Him to go on suggesting plans for your advancement, until you are suited? May it not be possible that *this* is the Lord’s way!”

Tom toyed with his napkin, rolling it tightly, as if he were a surgeon’s assistant, and about to assist in an operation, while Helen continued:

“And don’t you see, that it will not be so great a sacrifice, after all? If Dr. and Mrs. Vanden come here to board I shall have a little extra money, for you know that mamma has promised half of what they pay, to me, if I will look after certain details of the housekeeping.”

This time Tom laughed.

“A pretty large *if*! I hope that the certain details are not very essential to the Doctor’s comfort,” he said.

“Don’t worry about the Doctor’s comfort,” returned Helen; “but let me give you the details, not of the housekeeping, but of my plan. I don’t mean to give up study, though my course will be less regular than yours. I shall buy books and music, and attend lectures, and read the papers,

so you need not fear that I shall be so old-fashioned and ignorant that you will be ashamed to introduce me to your friends when I come to hear your Commencement oration ! ”

“None of that, Helen ! A fellow would be a brute to be ashamed of a sister who had given up her chance of education for his sake.”

“And don’t you see, that it will be pleasanter for mother than it would be if I went away too ? She could never stay here alone.”

“You are not to take me into consideration in your plans,” said Mrs. Betson. “Of course we can not now carry out our projects of closing our house for a time, and setting up a house in New Haven for a time ; but some other plan for me can be devised.”

“I think that I shall stay here with you, mother ; so let’s get at those shirts to-morrow ; next week we shall have to arrange the rooms. I hope that Mrs. Vananden will like the new paper. Her rooms at the Crosby house are just lovely ! ”

Helen seemed to consider that she had gained her point, but Tom had to talk the matter over many times before he could bring himself to ac-

cept Helen's sacrifice. He would say to himself, "I don't believe that I could do it, give up my chances of an education to help some one else: but Helen seems so willing, even anxious about it. I don't understand it; and I am afraid that I am not fit to be a minister!" While Tom was willing and even anxious that Helen should use her own share of the money which Mrs. Betson felt could be set apart, out of their diminished means, for their education, he could not bring himself to the point where he wanted to relinquish his claim to *her*, and this thought troubled him, and he became very unhappy over it. He remembered Mr. Ried's sermon on the text "Seeketh not her own," and he asked himself, "Can this which I thought to be a desire to do Christ's work, to obey his command in preaching the gospel — can this be a self-seeking? I can't accept her sacrifice, neither can I be willing to make a corresponding one." Tom had a good many puzzling thoughts over this question, and got quite into the dark. He even began to think that he had no right to call himself a Christian at all, while he was harboring so much of selfish-

ness. Finally, he had a little talk with Mr. Ried.

“See here, my boy,” said the pastor, when Tom had opened his heart to him, “you think that God wants you to preach the gospel?”

“Why, yes, sir, I have thought so until lately ; but I don’t believe that I can ever be fit. A Christian, and especially a minister, ought to be willing to make sacrifices ; and, as I have told you, I can’t be willing to relinquish all my hopes and prospects of a thorough education ; and yet it seems that I ought to be willing to do as much as my sister.”

“Tom,” said the pastor, “what reason have you for supposing that the Lord requires of you exactly the same sacrifice that he calls upon Helen to make?”

Tom was a little surprised at the question ; but he answered quite readily :

“Why, I thought that a Christian ought to be willing to do or suffer anything.”

“Are you willing to lay your hand upon those coals in that stove?”

“Why, no ; I don’t think I am ; yet if it were

what Christ required I should ask him for strength as I needed."

"But," said Mr. Ried, "God has required just that of some among the early Christians; why don't you conclude that he requires it of you because others have been called to suffer thus? You have been measuring your duty by Helen's. It may be that the Master has set to you a harder task than this self-denial has been to her. In these last few weeks you have been cherishing plans of independence, ideas of self-education, of growing strong by overcoming hindrances, and of the gratification it would be to you to feel that greatly by your own endeavor you have made your way to a position of influence and usefulness. Now, what if God requires you to put away these ambitions, laudable though they may be in some cases, and accept the aid which your sister offers, saving time and strength for the Lord's work? Are you ready to sacrifice your pride and your notions of independence? Suppose you look a little more closely at this side of the question."

"I confess that I have not considered it in the light of a sacrifice that I ought to make in accept-

ing her offer; it has seemed as if the older and stronger should bear the burden of work if there is one to be borne by either of us."

"Tom, said the pastor, "you are willing to devote your time, your strength, your talents and all else that you possess to the work of preaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, but there is one little bit of pride and independence that you are not quite ready to lay upon the altar. Now, it is not for me to say that Helen should lay down her plans, and I know that these are cherished plans, but if she has prayerfully and conscientiously made her decision, and your mother, with whom, after all, the matter rests, concurs in Helen's views, why, then, it seems to me that you should consider very carefully and very prayerfully before you refuse; and don't imagine that you are to measure your duty by hers."

The Betsons were not poor, but there had been some heavy losses which called for a lessening of expenses and a change of plans, with a sacrifice on the part of some one, and Helen came promptly to the front in the matter, while Tom spent a great deal of time and wasted his strength in

endeavoring to bring himself into exactly the same position. Now he had a new field for conflict; he was a proud fellow, and he had always been a hero worshiper. A self-made man was his idol, and I am not sure that he was not secretly glad of the opportunity which he saw opening before him for following in the footsteps of some of his favorite heroes; and now Helen had stepped quietly forward and closed the door. Tom had a vague notion that she had given up the dearest hope of this life, and perhaps it was well that he could not know of the conflict through which she had passed before she so quietly and persistently held her position. Could he have seen her as she gathered up the catalogues, and photographic views, and the illustrated magazine articles, and whatever else she had collected that related to the school which she had selected, and put them all away in the darkest corner of the closet, with a look on her face such as comes only to one who buries a cherished hope, he must have wondered more at the cheerfulness with which she went about the work of carrying new plans into effect. It was yet early spring. Tom would be at home until

fall, and she meant to make the most of him. There were many things to be done in view of his long absence, and Helen gave herself resolutely to the work.

And this, which seemed to be only the settlement of a little family matter, had brought something new into Tom's life. He began to see more clearly that to him who commits all his way unto the Lord there is nothing in which he may act independently ; that a complete submission takes in pride and ambition as well as time and talents ; that the requirement, " Follow me," covers everything.

Mrs. Vananden's presence in the household was a great help to Helen. The lady herself, looking back to her own girlhood, remembered her needs ; and when Helen came into her room, as she sometimes did, with a look on her face that said, " I've come to a hard place," she was ready with her word, and it was always a word in the right place.

It was a dark, rainy evening, a week or two after the Doctor and his wife were settled among them. Helen had a cold ; Tom had gone with the Doctor to prayer-meeting, leaving Helen to

nurse her cold, very much to her disappointment. She had an unusually hard day; some of those "details" about which Tom had been suspicious had gone all awry, just as housekeeping details will. And that wretched cold! sniff! sniff! eyes, nose and cheeks red as a peony! and temper—well, the less said about that the better for Helen's reputation. The world looked all askew, and my young lady felt as though home were dull, every association uncongenial, and her whole range of occupation narrow. While she did not regret her sacrifice, there were hours when a sense of its bitterness came over her afresh, and this was one of them.

In reply to a remark of Helen's about the narrowness of her life, Mrs. Vananden said:

"My dear child, it is not for you to talk about narrowness. Why, you have a breadth and scope of influence and power that might well make you tremble! It is not flattery for me to say that you are a leader among the young people. You are aware of that, and you cannot evade or turn away from the responsibilities of that position. You have a Sunday-school class. How that widens your influence! Those little girls have

mothers ; some of them have mothers who are not Christians. Did you ever think how your teachings may be echoing in the house of those children ? how, through them, you, young as you are, may reach the fathers and mothers ? Narrow ! Why, your life is a growth, broadening and brightening even into perfect proportions and the brightness of day ! ”

“ I know,” said Helen, “ that I am unreasonable to-night, for I do think that I belong to Christ, and that the things he gives me to do and to bear are just what is needful and right ; but sometimes I get discouraged, and everything seems so empty.”

“ I think that what you need is to seek for the continual presence of the Saviour. You need to have in your *own* experience the fulfillment of the promise of our Lord, “ We will come unto him and make our abode with him.” There is a peculiar sense in which the Lord may be present with his children, so that they may feel not only secure and safe, but conscious of his love and presence. This is not a visionary thought for it is distinctly promised ; neither need it be an occa-

sional experience, for the words are, 'Make our abode with him.' "

While the rain fell heavily without, Helen sat curled up on the rug before the open grate, her head buried in the cushions of a great arm-chair, and listened to such words of counsel. And they were not beyond her depth, for that last winter had been a period of growth to Helen Betson. Steadily her feet had been tending upwards ; and she was being lifted into that plane of life where the stern performance of duty gives place to the service of love. The free, happy service of a heart abiding in Christ, the full surrender of the soul, turns bondage into freedom and duty into love, and Helen was not far from the point where she would find that self-forgetting love would make her life a joyful song.



CHAPTER XXI.

HELEN DECIDES A QUESTION.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."



HELEN Betson stood upon the doorstep at the parsonage, talking for a few moments with Mr. Ried. The topic was a Sunday-school picnic that was to come off very soon.

"Can you come around to the parlors this evening and help with those banners?" asked Mr. Ried, when the matter which Helen came about had been disposed of.

"This evening?" repeated Helen, hesitatingly. "Why, I could, only there is Mrs. Moshier's party."

“Ah! and you are going?” asked Mr. Ried, with a touch of disapproval in his tones.

Helen noticed it, and she answered a little doubtfully:

“Why, yes, sir, I intended to go; but, of course, if there were more important matters in hand, I could give up the party; but I supposed that I could do my part of the work to-morrow, or even later. We have nearly a week yet.”

“Oh, It is not that; we have time enough, I suppose,” returned Mr. Ried. “I presume that there will not be many to help this evening, so there will be plenty to do to-morrow night.”

“But are not you and Mrs. Ried going to Mrs. Moshier’s?” asked Helen.

“I think not,” replied Mr. Ried; “she will hardly expect to see her pastor there.”

“Why, has she not sent you invitations?” asked Helen, in surprise.

Mr. Ried smiled.

“Certainly; Mrs. Moshier never forgets the proprieties.”

Helen looked puzzled.

“Mr. Ried,” she began, “I don’t understand you at all!”

“Don’t you? I was not aware that my remarks were of a puzzling character. Which of them is it that you do not understand?” He was laughing now, and Helen laughed too, as she answered :

“Taken singly, they are plain enough ; but I do not see the connection.”

“Well,” he returned, “let me enlighten you by asking a question. Have you any idea as to what sort of an entertainment this is to be ? ”

“Why, like any other party, I suppose,” replied Helen. “It is understood to be a congratulatory gathering on the occasion of her taking possession of her grand new house, like an old-fashioned house-warming.”

“Well, suppose you talk it over with my cousin, Mrs. Vananden ? ”

Helen went down street towards home, wearing a somewhat puzzled look. Now it so happened that the subject of amusements had never been up for Helen Betson’s consideration. As a school-girl she had been allowed to do pretty much as she pleased, except that there were a few things which she and Tom understood that their father disapproved of and these things they

avoided. Among these were card playing, and all other games of kindred character; and Tom had grown up with a settled conviction that his father was right, and he would no more touch the unclean things than he would handle red-hot coals. When the games were introduced in companies where he chanced to be, he always excused himself from engaging in them on the plea that he had no taste for anything of that sort; that is, he did so until, of late, he had been led to look into the subject for himself, and saw no reason for changing his views; but, on the contrary, found many reasons which strengthened him in his convictions.

At the school-girl parties which Helen had attended she had danced as a matter of course. Her father never particularly objected, though he considered it a senseless and silly waste of time and strength. He would not consent to his daughter's attendance at dancing-schools because it was "nonsense," and because he never saw a dancing-master with whom he wished his children to be upon a footing, such as the relations of teacher and pupil would necessitate. Still, Helen had picked up a very *creditable* knowledge

of the art and was quite fond of the amusement. Since she became a professing Christian the subject had not once occurred to her, owing greatly to the fact that her father's sickness and death following so closely upon her public confession of Christ, had, for the time shut her off from social visits, and she had never resumed her attendance upon entertainments of the gayer sort. But now Mrs. Moshier had left her boarding-house, and gone to live in one of the most elegant houses in town, and her invitations were out for a grand entertainment. It had never occurred to Helen that she might not attend with the utmost propriety ; and her dress had cost her considerable time and money ; but it was all ready, and her errand down town was to try it on, and select the gloves and ribbons to go with it.

Mr. Ried had awakened some new thoughts in her mind, which she resolved as she went along. "Talk it over with Mrs. Vananden." In the first place, Mrs. Vananden was out of town when Mrs. Moshier's delicately-tinted and perfumed notes were sent around, and had only returned the day before, and, though she had grown so soon into the habit of carrying her heartaches to

her new friends, Helen had not learned to talk over her little anticipations ; someway she fancied that parties were such an indifferent matter to Mrs. Vananden that she would appear silly in that lady's eyes if she greeted her with idle talk about Mrs. Moshier's party ; so she was silent, though her tongue ached to talk all through breakfast time.

"Mrs. Vananden !" she said, bursting into that lady's presence, "are you going to Mrs. Moshier's this evening ?"

Mrs. Vananden looked up in some surprise, not at the question, but at the vehemence of the questioner.

"I think not ; Mrs. Moshier will scarcely expect to see me," she replied, smilingly.

"Just the words Mr. Ried used !" exclaimed Helen, half petulantly. "And I don't know at all what either of you mean."

"Don't you ?" asked Mrs. Vananden.

"No, I don't ! Why wouldn't she expect to see you as well as other people ? And, of course, she would not expect everybody to stay away. I should think that she would want her pastor, anyway."

"Helen," said Mrs. Vananden, "Mrs. Moshier holds many opinions which are at variance with the word of God as I read it, and as our pastor and *hers* preaches it. Among them are her views upon the subject of social entertainments. I should not feel justified in giving an entertainment of the sort that hers will be to-night, and I see no reason why it would be any more justifiable for me to attend *hers*."

"Do you think it wrong for Christians to attend parties?" asked Helen, with a great wonder in her tones and face.

Mrs. Vananden smiled.

"You are asking a question which covers a great deal of ground. Let me ask you one that is narrower in its application. Would you have thought it right for you or for me to have attended the military ball last winter?"

"Why, no, I guess not. Mother would never let me go to a public entertainment of that sort; so I never thought anything about the right or wrong of it for Christians," said Helen, adding: "But I know that it would be a strange place in which to fancy meeting Mr. Ried. On the

whole, I don't think that it would be just the place where a Christian ought to go."

"Well, now I am so simple, or so bigoted, as I suppose our friend Mrs. Moshier would call it, that I am unable to see any difference between a fashionable dancing party, got up by a number of persons sending out select invitations, and one which is managed entirely by one person, when there is no difference in the nature of the entertainment. Mrs. Moshier will have dancing, and she will have card-tables, and will serve wine, and I presume that their will be accommodations for smokers. Now I fail to see the difference between the two things, and if one is wrong, why then the other is wrong too."

"But," said Helen, "the people who got up that military ball argued just the other way. I remember that I heard Mr. Burgess trying to persuade a friend of mine to attend: and he said that it was exactly the same thing as a private party, that the committee were very particular in making out their list, and that everything would be in the style of the most genteel private entertainments."

"Yes, the only point of difference in our argu-

ment is that these people argue that both are right, while I argue that both are wrong."

"But," continued Helen, "I can't see just where the harm lies. Of course I believe that some of these things are wrong; but, then, one is not obliged to engage in them. There will be plenty of people that will not go near the card-tables, and many who will not drink wine."

"And I presume that there will be some who will not dance," added Mrs. Vananden.

"Mrs. Vananden, do you think it is wrong to *dance*?"

"How would you feel to see your pastor dancing?" was the response.

"Why, I don't know; I guess I should be astonished. I suppose it is partly because we have been accustomed to think of ministers as being above such things, that we are shocked at the thought; but I have always danced, and I never thought it was wrong; though I knew that some people disapproved of it. But, honestly, I never heard one good reason given for disapproval. Now, won't you please give me some arguments?"

"In favor?" asked the other, smiling.

“ Oh, no, I have all I need in favor.”

“ I used to be passionately fond of the amusement myself,” said Mrs. Vananden. “ Indeed, for a long time the unwillingness to give up the practice stood between my soul and my Saviour. Now, if you would like to know why I do not dance I will tell you. In the first place, I found, very early in my Christian life, that the nearer I kept to Christ the less inclination I had to engage in the pastime; and I naturally concluded that if the two loves could not abide with me at the same time there must be some antagonism between the two. For me the question settled itself by my growing distaste for the amusement. But there are reasons which I might give you which ought to appeal to those who would not be swayed by any thought of Christian obligation. For instance, the effect upon health. It needs no labored argument to prove that close rooms, late hours, violent exercise during those late hours and undue excitement, all of which are almost invariably the accompaniments of the practice, are in a high degree pernicious to health.”

“ But,” said Helen, “ I have heard people say

that it was a very healthful exercise, and gave strength and elasticity to the limbs as well as making people graceful."

"Well, my dear, I am the wife of a physician, and have a brother-in-law who is also a physician, so that I have some means of knowing how it is regarded by the profession; and, besides, I could tell you of many young girls who died early, falling victims to disease induced by dancing and its concomitants, among them a dear friend of my girlhood, a girl of rare qualities and bright promise. If I had a daughter I would sooner run the risk of her being as ungraceful as an elephant than take the risk of the loss of health and life itself."

"But just for once in a while there couldn't be much danger in that."

"It is not like you to reason that way, Helen. If a thing is wrong at all it is wrong always, isn't it?"

"I suppose so," replied Helen, doubtfully.

"Now, let me give you some reasons why, as a Christian, I do not dance. I have found as I said in the first place, that nearness to Christ crowds out all desire to engage in this amuse-

ment. Indeed, this is my strongest reason ; but there are others. The practice as we find it is damaging to the mind and morals. I am convinced that there is a great loss of moral purity inevitably connected with the practice. This may seem a strong assertion ; but look at the association of the dance. Again, did you ever hear of any one asking God's blessing upon a company gathered for an evening's entertainment of this sort? Do people, even those who are loudest in defense of their favorite amusement, expect or gladly welcome to their midst the minister of the gospel or those eminent as Christian workers?" Do they even expect that men of culture and high literary attainments will fritter away precious hours thus?"

"But, after all, is dancing any worse than some other things that people engage in for amusement?" asked Helen.

"I presume not ; but because stealing is no worse than lying, shall we steal?"

Helen laughed.

"I see," she said, "that isn't much of an argument, but people do call it one."

"I know they do," returned her friend, "and

I would substitute only harmless and rational amusements, not forgetting that what would seem enjoyable to me might be very dull and meaningless to you younger people."

"But I don't see," pursued Helen, "just why one can not carry religion into the dancing-room. I think that if I were to have Willard Hunting for a partner to-night that I could, and most likely should, talk about religion. You see we have had a good deal to say about the subject lately. Willard is very much interested, and I—" here Helen's voice sank to a whisper—"I am praying for him."

Mrs. Vananden smiled.

"Dear child," she said, "does it not strike you as somewhat incongruous, this mingling of religious conversation with the music of a dancing tune, with the gay dress and trifling conversation around you?"

At this point of the conversation there came a rap at the door, and Mrs. Vananden admitted a visitor.

"Don't go," she said, as Helen was about to slip away. "Mrs. Graves is the very person to tell you a story that will answer your thought bet-

ter than any argument I can shape." Then, turning to Mrs. Graves, she continued : " Strangely enough, you have come just at the right time ; I want you to tell Helen how you tried to carry religion into the ball-room."

A bright flush spread itself over the face of the visitor for a moment, as if a painful recollection had been awakened ; then she said :

" Is our Helen desirous of trying the experiment ? I can assure her it is a dangerous one to try ; for you risk the loss of spiritual growth and vigor, and there is scarcely a chance of doing a bit of good. As for my own experiment, it ended disastrously enough ; and had I not been spared and given grace to retrieve my error as far as possible the end would have been sad, indeed ! After I was engaged to Mr. Graves I became a Christian, and, of course, I longed to have him join me in the beginning of a new life ; but while he always listened to my urgent appeals with some degree of interest, that was all. Satan suggested that I ought to be careful not to disgust my friend by unnecessary strictness, so I went out with him just as before, to all sorts of places, without regard to the question of con-

sistency. I thought that I was manifesting a very good spirit, and I really imagined that I was glorifying God when I accompanied my husband to a series of dancing parties at Perkins' Hall and talked religion to him on the way home and between the sets. But how Satan must have rejoiced, for my inconsistency drove my husband into infidelity; and it was long years before I regained what I had lost; frittered away. To be sure, after my marriage I only danced at private entertainments, but I never heard God recognized in any manner at such a party; and I lost my relish for prayer, and soon ceased my effort for the conversion of my husband. My health was undermined by late hours and the violent exercise, and I spent five years of pain and weariness before I regained what I had thrown away, either physically or spiritually.

“Mr. Graves has told me since, that it was the fact that he saw so little difference in my habits and pursuits after I had professed Christ that led him to renounce all faith in a religion which seemed to have so little power upon the lives of those who professed to be guided by its principles.

“I tell you, Helen, don’t you try to be a dancing Christian. I have learned, by a long, bitter experience, that to be ‘unspotted from the world’ is to stand aloof from all questionable amusements and employments; to engage in nothing which crowds the love of Christ into the background, and be sure that you will never lead a soul to Christ by any sort of a compromise with worldliness.”

“One question more,” said Helen. “Does the Bible anywhere expressly forbid dancing?”

Mrs. Vananden smiled.

“Does the Bible anywhere expressly forbid throwing stones at your neighbor’s windows?”

Helen laughed, as she said :

“I never found the prohibition.”

“Therefore you may throw stones,” added Mrs. Vananden.

Helen helped to trim banners that evening, and between pauses of the talk her heart sent up its petition :

“Keep me unspotted from the world ! ”



CHAPTER XXII.

CHRISTIAN GIVING.

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord.”



THIS was Mr. Ried's topic. His people had been accustomed, annually, to nerve themselves to listen to a dry dissertation upon the duty of the Christian Church to support the mission cause, interspersed with more dryness, in the shape of statistics, gathered from the *Missionary Record* or *Herald*, these same statistics being the driest of all reading to those uninterested in the reports. Mr. Ried had been sorely grieved over the indifference of the Court Street people in regard to the subject of benevo-

lence, and sorely puzzled, too, as to how to bring about a different state of things. Personally he had no cause of complaint. His salary was always promptly paid, and his people were ready to take up his burdens; but to give for objects outside they were not so ready. Were new furnaces needed, the older men were ready, with open purses, to meet the expense; was it new library books, the money could be raised without difficulty; was it a picnic, the young men were ready to meet the expenses incident to a first-class affair; and there was the Young Ladies' Association, with its crochet-work and its slipper-bags, and card-receivers, with its fairs and festivals, stepping in to fill a gap here and there in the need of the church; but let there come an appeal for help for the Zulu Mission, or for some newly-organized church in the West, struggling to build a simple, unpretending house of worship, and these same Court Street people would most likely fold their arms closely over the breast-pocket and dolefully sigh over the "many calls for money."

While growing in the grace of "brotherly love," the growth had been too narrow to reach

out and embrace the masses outside. The eradication of this selfishness, and the expanding of the thoughts and interests of his people, so as to include a world, was the object for which the pastor was seeking. Could he make them see the deformity of Christian character which would inevitably grow out of these habits of thinking and acting? The whole lesson of Christ's life was one of giving. A giving that had in it not the thought of personal gain, but of personal sacrifice. Would they, who, having accepted the richest of his gifts, professed to learn of him turn away from the great lesson of giving? and would they persist in thinking and speaking of benevolence as a duty, when, in truth, it is a great, a blessed privilege?

The work being the Master's, and they the honored stewards, holding for him the things of this world, could they not bring their ideas of benevolence up to a higher plane than this, the goading of duty? A man should not ask how little it will do to give, but, rather, how much can I give? What does the Lord call for of his own?

God could carry on his work without our help,

even to the preaching of the gospel to the heathen in the darkest corner of the world. He could irradiate these midnight regions with the light of Christ's love and the glory of his salvation; but he has chosen to make us co-workers with himself, that in us might be cultivated the grace of *giving*. Christ's whole life was a gift, and this made all his gifts unto us more precious. The comforting words that come to us in the midst of our griefs, are they not the more comforting because He, by whom they were uttered suffered in like manner? The strength that is promised for the hour of temptation, does it not support and brace, as we remember, that into that sinless life there came a corresponding temptation? Is it not the putting of ourselves into our gifts that makes them of value? Then, shall we not learn to give because we want to, as well as because we ought? As to the *ought*, we can have no doubts: "According to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee." "Charge them that are rich in this world, * * * that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

But while we all acknowledge the duty of beneficence, how many of us count it a precious privilege to give freely, even as we have freely received? Oh, that we could get above the level of the sort of giving, that if it does not bestow grudgingly, at least has none of the delight of real *Christian* giving! Let us rejoice that we are thus honored of God; made the instruments of carrying the gospel message into all the world, even the uttermost parts! Let us educate our children to "give as they pray, from the heart, and as a means of grace."

Mr. Ried had some eager listeners that day. Helen Betson with her usual interest, followed him all through, though she wondered where her portion would come in. The subject was one which had, thus far, failed to gain her attention, further than that she dropped her money into the box quite as a matter of course. Now that she considered it a little, she was forced to confess that she had no better reason than the common one, that it was a proper thing to do. All at once it dawned upon her that she was privileged to help on the cause of Christ. It came like a wonderful revelation, and with it came re-

flection, of how little she had been doing of this work: "According to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given you." To Helen these words came with a double meaning, "According to the blessing." Abundantly had the Lord blessed her with every good gift. Her Lord and Saviour had given himself; therefore, should she keep back the offering of her own life? Rather let her give herself, and with her money let her give her sympathy, her interest, her prayers. The whole subject of benevolence stood out from everything else, illuminated with the light of the word of God. How plain it all seemed to her. Her life and her means might be but little to give, yet, had not God chosen the weak things to confound the mighty? and would he not use her and her gifts for his own glory? The little sum that she had thought to give that morning, suddenly seemed very small to her, and she was glad that a month's allowance had just been paid, that she might begin at once to give according to her new rule — "According to the blessing of the Lord," and with the spirit of thankfulness for the privilege.

Mr. Bates seemed not quite satisfied with the

sermon, if one might judge from the remarks which he made to his wife, who was not present at church.

"It is the day for Foreign Missions," he said, "and I must say that we had the queerest anniversary sermon, this morning, that I ever heard. There was not a word of Foreign Missions in it from beginning to end, nor any kind of missions."

"What did he preach about?" asked Mrs. Bates, whose confidence in her pastor's good sense was by no means shaken by her husband's imputation of queerness.

"Well, his subject was 'Christian Giving.' He told us that while benevolence should be a settled principle, we ought to get above the simple thoughts of duty, and give from love of it. He gave us some good thoughts, but not a single bit of information."

"Ah! And how many copies of the *Missionary Herald* are taken in the congregation?" asked Mrs. Bates.

"About fifty, I think," returned the gentleman.

"Indeed! It is a pity he had not thought to give a few statistics to a congregation with such

limited means of knowing things for themselves!" said Mrs. Bates, sarcastically.

"Well," persisted Mr. Bates, "it would have been in keeping with the occasion, if he had spoken somewhat at length of the importance of the work and of its progress."

To this remark the lady made no response, but presently she asked:

"How about the collection?"

The gentleman grew animated at once, and replied, promptly:

"The best we have had for years! I think it was double that of last year."

"Pity about the sermon!" said his wife, as if she had not heard the reply to her question.

Mr. Bates looked at her curiously, and replied:

"Oh? the sermon was well enough."

"So I should judge," she returned; adding: "I presume that you gave the same as usual to the cause?"

Mr. Bates hesitated, wondering what prompted the question; finally he answered:

"Well, no; I gave just double the amount which I calculated to."

“Ah! How did that happen?”

“I am sure I can't tell; only it seemed a pleasant thing to do, and I knew that even that was not as God has prospered us.”

Mrs. Bates smiled, and thought within herself: “Whatever the sermon may have been, it seems to have done its work. I don't think we need question the wisdom or appropriateness of preaching that brings forth good results.”

On his way down to evening service Mr. Norton Graves stepped in to consult Mr. Bates about a notice to be given out from the desk. You see Mr. Graves had stepped into the business matters of the church as though he had always belonged there.

“What did you think of the sermon this morning?” asked Mr. Bates.

“Think of it! Why, I have been thinking of it all the afternoon; and I have concluded that we have, as a rule, very slight conceptions as to the height of privilege to which God would exalt us. The words, “co-workers with God,” raise one to a summit of blessing and honor scarcely to be realized. I feel as if we must open our hearts to take in the whole world; it is full of

sin and sorrow, blindness and degradation ; and we, who have been healed, must hasten to spread the glad news of the healing power."

"Yes, it is true ; we are not doing all we might," returned Mr. Bates, who decided that it would not do to criticise a sermon which had given rise to such impulses as these. "I have always meant to give liberally ; but I felt this morning that I had been niggardly in my contributions to enterprises outside our own church."

"If, as individuals, we find that, as we go outside our own souls and seek to help others, we bring a blessing upon ourselves, so, I suppose that, as a church, we may expect to increase, even by scattering."

"Old Deacon Barnard used to say that Solomon spoke the literal truth in the text which you have partly quoted, and that the Lord always returned to him many fold all that he gave to the cause of benevolence," said Mrs. Bates.

"Then, if one could bring himself to take so low a view of the matter, it would pay, as a pecuniary investment, to be liberal," said Mr. Bates.

“That, certainly, is not the highest view to take of it,” replied the other gentleman; “but the thought may not be unworthy of consideration. If, as we were told this morning, we give as a privilege, we may surely be glad to know that, by our giving, we shall not be impoverished, but still have something to give. I suppose that if we could get into that habit of mind that would lead us to thank the solicitor for the opportunity to give, we should come nearer the Bible thought about the matter.”

Mr. Bates did not reply immediately. This young brother was reaching and grasping the sweet mysteries of the Christian's life, its duties and privileges, in a way that astonished this man, who had been years in the race, and he thought within himself: “The ground must have been well prepared for the seed when it makes such a rapid and vigorous growth, and, looking back for a little, he reflected how earnest had been the effort of the pastor to so present the truth, that all might have a clear perception of the great principles underlying all Christian living; and so there came to this man the conviction that many of his criticisms upon the style of preaching had

been wasted. He was conscious, in his own soul, of a growth beyond that of other years. How was it, that after living so long, comparatively inactive, in the service of Christ, he had been stirred to effort, even to personal effort, for the saving of a soul?" When he spoke again he said:

"Well, I suppose if we could get at the Bible thought, about most things, we should find things cleared up a good deal."

Mr. Graves rose to go.

"About this notice. Do you think it best to add that a collection will be taken for the benefit of the cause at the close of the lecture? Of course, the object of presenting the subject is to awaken an interest, so as to gain supporters; but how will our people receive it?"

"Judging from to day's collection they will be ready. Yes; announce a collection by all means; at least, state that there will be an opportunity to contribute," was Mr. Bates' ready reply.

And this was the man who had been accustomed to excuse himself too often from contributing to various causes foreign to themselves, by quoting the old adage, "Charity begins at

home." What had become of his *prudence* in these matters?

On his way to the church Mr. Graves met two or three others, to whom he spoke of this matter and found that their views corresponded with those of himself and Mr. Bates; so he thought Mr. Ried seemed a little doubtful.

"I am satisfied that we ought to give liberally to this cause," he said; "but you know our people do not respond very promptly to the calls of the collection-box, and I always feel ashamed of a small result."

"Well," responded Mr. Graves, "I think we had better try it. I am inclined to think that our education is progressing."





CHAPTER XXIII.

FRAGMENTS.

“Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost.”

MEANTIME, at the Elmers, they had been looking forward to changes in their life, changes with which the “something,” that Prof. Graves wanted to “talk over with his brother, had largely to do—changes which would fall sadly upon Rachel. Mrs. Norton Graves was there, spending a day, helping Lydia with her sewing, when Mrs. Coville ran in for a word with Rachel. Carrying her sad heart and heavy burdens, she often came to Rachel for counsel and comfort.

"I don't know how it is," she said to Mrs. Graves, as they sat together, while Rachel went to hunt out a bit of cloth to match the gray of Freddy Coville's pants; "once I should never have thought of coming to Rachel for such a thing, not that I ever thought her penurious, or unwilling to grant a favor; but it seemed so unlike her to want to take the trouble to help any one; she and Lydia seldom needed to ask favors, and it was always very hard to come to them; it seemed as if they didn't like the bother of it."

"And now?" asked Mrs. Graves.

"Why, Rachel Elmer is the best friend I have! And how different things are here in this old house! They used to be so much alone; but since they got to living so much for other folks, this house has come to be the dropping-in place of the neighbors."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Graves, "and I sometimes wonder how Rachel has reconciled herself to the surrender of the old-time quiet and order of the place."

"And these new-comers," said Mrs. Coville; "it seems very queer to hear the little girl go-

ing about the house, up and down stairs, following Miss Rachel about, as though she had lived here all her life."

"Yes, indeed ; strange, but providential," returned Mrs. Graves.

This was the story of the new-comers. Away back, during the stormy, blustering March days, there had come to the sisters a message like this :

DEAR RAY :—Can you come to me, for the sake of the dear mother, mine by adoption ? Will you come ? Will you come to one who fears that she has not long to live ?

Your cousin,

MARY.

Making a few hurried preparations, Rachel took a long journey, and a few days later Lydia received a letter.

"Dear Lydia," it ran, "you and I need not have worried about my loneliness when you were away ; the Lord has provided for this as for all other needs. Our Mary is not dying. The doctor says that with rest of body and mind she may live for years ; and this rest, which she needs, I propose to give her, as far as I can. Only God

can give peace to the soul; yet, with worldly cares off her mind, I trust that she will not be unmindful of Him who has, thus far, cared for her. As soon as she can be moved, which may be in a fortnight, I shall bring her home, with her daughter, another Ray. Her husband's death quite overcame her, and she has never recovered from the prostration which followed. They are not poor; and she insists upon making it a condition of her return with me, that she be allowed to pay for her board. I do not believe that I will give up the school, and I have been thinking about asking Mrs. Gordon to take the position of housekeeper in my establishment. She is in want of a home, and is of the household of faith; however, we can talk this all over when I get back."

All this came about to the surprise of everybody. It seemed like a revolution in their way of living. This introduction of three people, and of them a rollicking girl, would be likely to disturb the quiet serenity of the old house more than the daily coming and going of Rachel's little scholars; but Rachel always insisted that they being thus thrown upon her care was a

special providence, and one of her special causes for gratitude.

Coming in now with her bit of gray cloth, which she was sure she had somewhere, but which it had taken a long time to find, she seemed to her friends to have grown young in the last few months — and she felt younger, too. The fresh, young life of her namesake, infused into her own, brightened everything, and she found there was more to live for than she had fancied in the days when she spent hours and weeks and months working canvas screens. The very screens which had so annoyed Lydia stood now before the open fire-place, in a handsome frame, and Rachel sometimes smiled to herself as she looked at it and wondered how she ever found time to work canvas scenes !

The days flew by, and the morning came on which Lydia Elmer was to be married to Professor Graves. Only a very few guests were invited — just Mr. and Mrs. Norton Graves, Dr. and Mrs. Vananden, with Tom and Helen and Mr. Niles, and Mr. Lee, with a few neighbors.

The matter of the bride's dress had been the cause of much discussion between the sisters.

Rachel had some old-fashioned ideas as to an appropriate costume for the occasion ; she thought it should be either white or very light silk, and a veil, with orange blossoms, was indispensable. Lydia argued that such a costume would be a needless expense.

“ You know,” she said, “ That I look like a fright in light colors ; and I should never wear the dress again, though I might consent to make myself look ugly for once, and that, when I ought to look my prettiest ! ”

But Rachel’s mother was married in a white brocade, that stood alone and had been kept sacredly, to be handed down as an heirloom. Lydia having worn it once, in her school days, when she appeared at an “ Old Folks’ Concert,” declared now that she had enough of white silk dresses ; but the question of useless expense finally gained the day. Rachel held out long and fought bravely for her ideas of propriety.

“ What do people do who can’t get silk dresses ? ” asked Lydia. “ Mustn’t they get married because they must disregard the proprieties ? ”

“ Well, I can’t say that I think it would affect

the validity of the ceremony," replied Rachel, laughing; "but so long as *we* can afford it, and it is such a pleasant old-time idea, and has such associations, I can not bear to think of you in any other costume. I feel about it just as I do about the Thanksgiving dinners; there is a great deal of unnecessary work and expense connected with an orthodox Thanksgiving dinner; but the associations are sacred, and it seems like a religious sacrifice, and then, as certain things are appropriate and sacred to the house of God and the sacraments, so it seems to me that these things belong to the wedding feast. And as to those who can not afford them, why, it is just this, it is having the best you can afford."

But Lydia could not be convinced that it was her duty to make a martyr of herself in wearing a white silk dress, and she had very little of the reverence for ancient customs and habits which held Rachel to an observance of many things that seemed very foolish to the younger sister. With Rachel it was an almost morbid, worshiping passion, for that which bore the stamp of antiquity. The quaint old house, with its antique furniture; its cabinets and its closets, filled with relics of

those who had dwelt in the old house for three or four generations, were among her dearest treasures. And now this youngest and only remaining sister proposed to adopt the modern fashion of being married in a brown poplin traveling suit!

It was Mr. Ried's sermon on Christian giving that reached down through this worshipful love and put into Rachel's heart such thoughts of the beauty of benevolence, that, for the first time in her life, she was sorry she had not more to give, and, as for Lydia, she laid a note upon the plate, saying to herself:

"There goes the veil! I hope Ray will give the dress!"

Whether she did or not, white silk dresses and orange flowers suddenly lost favor, and she sewed away on the brown poplin as contentedly as though she had never thought on any other material for the bridal costume.

The newly-married pair were to leave at once for the West, where Professor Graves expected to take up the work of an evangelist. His labors at the Harley Mission had developed an amount of latent talent that had surprised both

himself and his friends ; and now that there were others to take up the work he was going to a wider field. The heart of the pastor rejoiced that they were able to send out into the fields beyond their own borders such efficient workers. Dr. Baumes had gone to a place where Christian workers were greatly needed, and now these two were going. Tom Betson, the manly boy, all aglow with zeal, was entering upon a period of preparation for his life-work, but in the meantime was reaching out, seeking to draw within the field his companions. One other was about to go forth as a worker, but Mr. Ried did not know of this as yet.

During the hour devoted to congratulations and "refreshments" Mr. Lee and Lydia had a bit of talk.

"You remember the words you said to me a few weeks ago about the way to find out one's duty."

"I remember the talk to which you refer," she said, "though I do not remember what I said."

"I told you that it was a question that puzzled me, whether I should go or stay," said Mr. Lee ; "but I think the question is decided."

“And you? —”

“Go! That last Thursday’s prayer-meeting talk decided me. I thought before when I talked with you that I only needed to know the way, and I would ‘go forward,’ but I found that there was something else in the way. I had not acknowledged the ‘authority of Jesus,’ but listening to Mr. Ried’s remarks upon that text, and his application of it to the two men at work by the sea, I began to realize that the calls of the Lord are imperative. He said: ‘Come ye after me: And straightway they forsook their nets and followed him.’”

It was Lydia who quoted the verse, and Mr. Lee responded:

“Yes, ‘straightway’ they acknowledged his authority and rendered prompt obedience, though they knew not whither he would lead them. And consider the result! To these and others was afterward given the command to preach to ‘all nations.’ Those men were, I suppose, as full of business concerns in their way as I am in mine. If I have any talent he wants that, or any latent — here he smiled — ‘energy’ he wants that. Shall I leave all and follow him in that

way? I tell you, Mrs. Graves," Lydia started to hear herself addressed by that name, "I know that the Master's vineyard is suffering for the want of laborers; can I hold back?"

"No you *can not*," she answered.

"So I think: therefore I shall close my office here as soon as I can make a transfer of my business, and get at once into the work of preparation."

"For the regular ministry?" asked Mrs. Graves.

"I think so; I have counseled with no one except your husband, but I shall see Mr. Ried, to-day. I felt the thrill of that command all through me all day last Sabbath, and it seems as if there were nothing for me but to preach the gospel."

"I am glad that you are going to do it," returned Lydia, "but what has become of your idea which you labored so earnestly to persuade Tom Betson into, last fall, that Christian lawyers were needed, and he might better study law with you than to study theology?"

"That idea has resolved into this, that while lawyers should be Christians as the ministerial profession is far more important than the legal, it

has stronger claims upon those who have a fitness for it. I have no great fondness for law and I do not know that I have any especial fitness for the work of the ministry ; but this I am sure of, it is better to try to persuade men not to quarrel than to help them settle quarrels."

"But so long as men will quarrel there must be some one to help them back to peace," said Lydia.

"True ; and I am not sure that in nine cases out of ten the minister would not do better work in the case than the lawyer."

"Especially if he were half lawyer," she said, laughing.

Then her husband came to say that it was time to go, and she held out her hand, saying, "Well, Mr. Lee, I can only repeat what I said before, 'Go forward.'"

"Thank you."

And so the workers parted, to meet perhaps this side, perhaps *that*. And Rachel gathered up the fragments of the feast, feeling as if there were other fragments to be gathered up. Just then she realized that there is nothing whole or complete in this life, nevertheless the command

is, "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." Should she not, then, use the remnant of her life for the Master of the feast?

And Mr. Lee, had he aught but fragments to give to the Master? He had spent the early morning in idle indifference to the claim which he now acknowledged. He had acquired habits of thinking that would always be a trouble and vexation. He had spent years in studies and pursuits that could be of very little advantage to him in the calling for which he was now about to be fitted.

And yet this is the command of the Lord himself, "Gather up the fragments."





CHAPTER XXIV.

UP THE MOUNTAIN.

“Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith.”



HELEN! Helen!”

It was Jenny Vosburgh's voice that came up to Helen as she sat in her own room one summer morning engaged in the very interesting occupation of darning stockings. There were at least a dozen things that she would rather be doing at that very moment ; but stockings had a very provoking way of wearing out and Helen had periodical spasms of order, and one of them had come upon her this morning. She recognized Jenny's voice, and answered, cheerily :

“ Well ! come up ! ”

Helen's opinion of her old schoolmate had changed somewhat since that day when she fought with her conscience over her duty to be kind and helpful toward Jenny. Three years in passing had brought many changes. Jenny had been away, first at school, then traveling considerably, and had developed qualities of mind and heart which made her more attractive than of old ; and, best of all, she was an earnest Christian. Dr. and Mrs. Vananden were still with Mrs. Betson, having found their home there so pleasant that they had never gone to housekeeping again ; and Mrs. Vananden was still the friend and counselor of Helen Betson, and now Jenny had been drawn within the circle of her influence. It is really wonderful, the power of one consecrated life in shaping and molding the character of young girls brought under the influence of that life ! Helen had grown to be quite content, though her path had not been quite smooth. There had been the little inequalities of the everyday walk, light weights to be cast aside, besetting sins to be overcome, obstacles to be overcome, such as all meet with ; and,

added to these, there had been a few darker days in the history of the last year, days of struggle and pain, days when to express her feelings would have been to cry out, "If it be possible, let me not drink of this bitter cup!" But there soon came the needed strength, and she could say, "Not my will, but thine!" And as she responded to Jenny's salutation, there was no trace of the conflict, except the added sweetness and beauty of her face.

Out on the hillside, where Robert Niles had begun his career as a Christian worker, a neat little church was fast approaching completion, and Jenny's errand was to invite Helen to ride out to Clarkson.

"Mr. Niles has invited us both, and he will be around in half an hour," explained Jenny. "Can you leave those horrid stockings, and go with us?"

Helen's spasm of putting to rights yielded to Jenny's energetic treatment, the prospect of a ride proving a positive antidote.

"To be sure I'll go," she said, promptly; and tossing her work into the basket to wait for another spasm, she ran down to tell her mother,

and arrange with the cook about certain matters pertaining to the dinner, and then came back to hurry into an appropriate toilet. One thing was noticeable about Helen Betson ; her toilets were always appropriate. No matter what the hour, the occasion, or the weather, she was always properly dressed. The neat gray dress and wrap, relieved by the blue wing that ornamented the hat, which exactly matched the dress in color, made a very suitable toilet for a ride out into the country. It was one of those matchless summer mornings, when earth and sky, and the very air we breathe, are full of the glory of the Creator. The quiet dignity of Mr. Niles did not particularly check the liveliness of Miss Jenny. That young lady was quite irrepressible, though she expected soon to occupy the position of the wife of one of the most influential business men of the city, and one equally eminent as a working Christian, none other than Mr. Niles himself ! Of course *she* was interested in the new church out at Clarkson !

After an hour's ride they came out upon the "Ridge," as it was called, and stopped at a curve of the road to take a look down the valley upon

the little city below, the river, the busy factories, and the farming country lying around all.

“How high up we are!” exclaimed Jenny. “I haven’t realized at all that we were getting so far above the level of the city”

“And yet you know that there was a height to be attained?” questioned Mr. Niles.

“Yes; but I suppose I had an idea that we were to make a steady ascent, all the time going up; instead of that we have had so much downhill that I had not realized that we were actually making progress upward.”

“Well, you see, our down-hills did not take us quite down into the valley, and each upward stroke has brought us a little higher than we were before,” said Mr. Niles.

“I see,” returned Jenny; “but suppose we had not come quite so far up, and had just stopped down there at Mr. Davis’?”

“Well?” questioned the gentleman, not quite falling in with her thought.

“Why, you see, if we had not come up to just this point, but had stopped a little short of it, we should never have known that we had risen at all.”

“Are you sure of that?” Were you not conscious of breathing a purer atmosphere, of being lifted above the smoke, and the din and turmoil of the life down there?” returned Mr. Niles.

“Well, yes; only I didn’t put it so. I knew that I was happy, but I didn’t think about its being the purity of the atmosphere that made me so,” said Jenny.

“And you find in this an illustration of our climbing in a spiritual sense?” questioned Mr. Niles. “Is that your thought?”

“Yes; I was thinking about Mr. Ried’s sermon last Sabbath morning. It must be worth a few struggles to attain such a height as that which he spoke of so glowingly; and the climbing, that seems very much like this we have done to-day, plenty of down-hill. Sometimes I think it is most all down!” This last with a half sigh.

“But when you come out in the clear light, and look back along the way in which you have been led, then you will see that there has been a gain,” replied Mr. Niles.

Helen had been silent during this talk, her face wearing a thoughtful expression. Now

Jenny turned suddenly toward her, and said:

"Helen, what have you steeping in that busy brain of yours? I know by your face that you 'have a thought,' as we say in the game."

"It is nothing," returned Helen; "only, might there not be a steady upward course, without these decents into the valleys, that make the journey so long and tiresome?"

"Oh, you would have a graded path," said Jenny, laughing. "Those are modern inventions, and I don't believe we will ever apply the principle to the religious life."

"Perhaps not; but all climbing is not like this we have done to-day; some hills have half-way places, where you may halt and take a retrospective view, instead of waiting until you reach the summit. It seems as though we ought to know if we are gaining anything."

"And all Christian experience is not alike. If we come into the possession of the rest of trust, we may not attain it in the same way that others have. You know Mr. Ried said that one might suddenly come into the light and blessedness of this stage of progress, recognizing it as a most wonderful lifting up of the soul toward heaven

and Christ. All at once burdens will drop away, selfishness and bitterness will be taken out of the heart, and rest and love and perfect peace will take their place. Or all might come upon one gradually, little by little, without a consciousness of any time when this new trust, this oneness with Christ, was attained. But the blessed results are in any case the same." This from Mr. Niles, as they drove slowly along the Ridge road.

"We were talking the matter over at home," said Jenny, "and I said that if it was all true, that we might claim the promise and have the indwelling of the Spirit. Why don't we, for surely we all, as Christians, desire it, and what is to hinder?" And Mrs. Vananden said that it was because we would not make room for Christ; that he could not come with the fullness of his power into a heart which held aught which was displeasing to the Holy Spirit.

"Yes," returned Mr. Niles, "there are many things to hinder our progress. Our climbing must necessarily be slow and difficult so long as we carry heavy weights. We ought to heed the

words of the apostle, and 'lay aside every weight.' It is certainly our privilege to grow in grace."

Arriving at the spot where the new church was rapidly going up, Mr. Niles left the girls in the carriage while he went to speak to the men who were at work upon the building.

"What an interest Robert takes in this work!" said Helen. "But it is no wonder, for it has all grown out of the seed he planted here."

"And who would have believed that a church would be built up here, or that the people would be strong enough to support a pastor!" replied Jenny.

"Did I tell you I went down to the Harley Mission Chapel last Sabbath afternoon?" continued Jenny. "Mr. Niles has taken a class there, and Mr. Graves wants me to teach a class of boys. I have half promised, but I don't feel as though I were fit to teach; but he has promised to let me off just as soon as he can find a better one."

Helen smiled, thinking that if that was the condition, Jenny would be likely to retain the class for a time at least.

"Did you know that Emma Patterson was

teaching with Rachel Elmer?" asked Helen. "You remember she went to Boston to study the Kindergarten system, and now she is going to introduce it into Rachel's school."

In these years "Miss Elmer's School for Little Girls" had become well known and popular, and, withal, a power in the neighborhood. Many a young girl dated a new era in her life, both intellectual and religious, from her entrance into the school. The quaint old house, so unlike its neighbors, was growing to be wonderfully attractive to the little folks. How full Rachel's life had become! Suppose that Mrs. Coville, looking on and thanking God that he had raised up such a friend for herself and her children, never thought to look back to that evening when she grumbled over her pastor's urgent appeal for more workers, and to connect her own little effort, almost unconscious as the effort was, with the growing usefulness of this woman who had been roused from her stupor and set at work.

"When do you expect Tom?" asked Robert, as he returned to the carriage and took up the reins to drive on to the home of his old friend,

Mr. Newton Clark, where they expected to dine.

"Next week," replied Helen.

"And will he stay until he enters the seminary?"

"I think so, though he may join Prof. Graves for a time. At last the Professor urges him to come, and I believe Mr. Ried thinks it would be a great advantage to him to learn something of that particular work. Mother will be disappointed, but, she says that father gave Tom to the work, and she must not hinder him in his preparation."

It was after dinner, as they were left alone for a few moments, sitting on the piazza which over-looked the valley, that Mr. Niles said to Helen:

"I had a letter from Mr. Lee last evening; a good, noble letter. Helen, did you not make a mistake?"

"No, Robert, no! I am sure I did not!" And Helen flushed painfully. "I told you this morning," she continued, "that father gave Tom to the work of the ministry, and I think that the

Lord gave me to my mother. She needs me, and my first duty is to her."

"Yes," returned Robert; "I ought not to have spoken that way, but —"

"Don't speak of it," said Helen, quickly. "It has taken me long to understand the leadings of Providence, and I do not fully comprehend now. Years ago I prayed to be allowed to work for Christ in our own church, and thereupon God shut me up at home. But you know how he blessed me, even in my rebellion, by permitting me to be a help to my dear father. Then I was anxious to prepare for a teacher, thinking to do the Master service in that way, but the path was again closed, and a greater blessing awaited me. God filled my need in the friendship and counsel of dear Mrs. Vananden, and so it has been always."

"And in this last?" asked Robert tenderly.

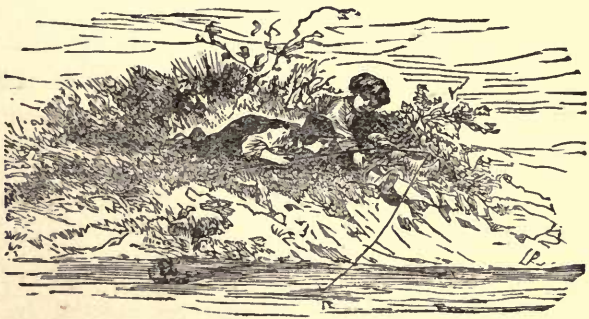
"In this I do not yet see the recompense," returned Helen; "but of this I am sure, that 'all things work together for good to them that love the Lord.'"

"Mr. Lee writes that Dr. Baumes expects to go out to Japan with him," said Mr. Niles.

“ Our own church will be well represented in the mission field.”

“ Yes, and after the harvest the laborers will all go home together,” said Helen softly.

THE END.



THE CHAUTAUQUA GIRLS AT HOME.

By *Pansy*. 12mo. Illustrated. I 50

'Pansy knows girls, and has the gift of story-telling, by which the hard facts of every-day life take on a charm as of fairy-land. No one can look into 'The Chautauqua Girls' without feeling the subtle fascination of its pictures of quiet life, and being drawn into warm sympathy with the four friends who long to form noble characters. They have been won to a love of Jesus by attending a camp-meeting at Chautauqua; but they find it so hard to be true to their new impulses, and to carry the spirit of the Bible into every-day life, that the story of their struggles, disheartening failures relieved by partial successes, is very human and full of genuine pathos. It is good summer reading, for beguiling away hours, and inspiring with generous purposes.'

"Pansy's last book, 'The Chautauqua Girls at Home,' is as fresh and inspiring as a fine morning in June. The four friends, Marion, Ruth, Flossy and Eurie, are of genuine flesh and blood, with the petty weaknesses that flesh is heir to, and the noble aspirations that come at times to every high-minded girl. Their unlikeness to each other in character and social position, and their mutual helpfulness in all sorts of difficulties, make a delightful story; instructive as well as fascinating. One finds it hard to lay down the book after beginning the first chapter. It will find many readers who will welcome its stimulating power to high aims in life, and to patience and hope in fighting hard battles."

Boston: D. LOTHROP & CO., Publishers.

CHEERFUL WORDS.*

In the whole range of English literature we can call to mind the works of no single author to which the title, "Cheerful Words," can more properly apply than to those of George Macdonald. It exactly expresses the element which permeates everything from his pen, whether sermon, essay, story or poem — an element which strengthens while it cheers, which instills new light and life into the doubting or discouraged soul, and incites it to fresh effort.

In the volume before us the editor has brought together, with a careful and judicious hand, some of the choicest passages from Macdonald's works, written in various keys and upon various subjects, but all marked by healthy sentiment and sunshiny feeling. In quoting what a late critic has said of the "electrical consciousness" which characterizes his writings, the editor remarks: "The breadth and manliness of tone and sentiment, the deep perceptions of human nature, the originality, fancy and pathos, the fresh, out-of-door atmosphere everywhere apparent; above all, the earnest, wholesome, but always unobtrusive religious teaching that underlies all his writings, give to the works of George Macdonald a certain magnetic power that is indescribable." And in the selections here made that power is singularly apparent. By turns they touch the heart, fire the imagination, moisten the eyes, arouse the sympathies, and bring into active exercise the better feelings and instincts of mind and heart.

The introduction to the volume is from the pen of James T. Fields, a personal friend and ardent admirer of the author. He regards Macdonald as a master of his art, and believes in holding up for admiration those like him, who have borne witness to the eternal beauty and cheerful capabilities of the universe around us, and who are lovingly reminding us, whenever they write, of the "holiness of helpfulness."

*Cheerful Words. By George Macdonald. Introduction by James T. Fields, and Biography by Emma E. Brown. Spare Minute Series. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.00.

RECENT BOOKS.

YENSIE WALTON. By Mrs. S. R. Graham Clark. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. \$1.50. Of the many good books which the Messrs. Lothrop have prepared for the shelves of Sunday-school libraries, "Yensie Walton" is one of the best. It is a sweet, pure story of girl life, quiet as the flow of a brook, and yet of sufficient interest to hold the attention of the most careless reader. Yensie is an orphan, who has found a home with an uncle, a farmer, some distance from the city. Her aunt, a coarse, vulgar woman, and a tyrant in the household, does her best to humiliate her by making her a domestic drudge, taking away her good clothing and exchanging it for coarse, ill-fitting garments, and scolding her from morning till night. This treatment develops a spirit of resistance; the mild and affectionate little girl becomes passionate and disobedient, and the house is the scene of continual quarrels. Fortunately, her uncle insists upon her attending school, and in the teacher, Miss Gray, she finds her first real friend. In making her acquaintance a new life begins for her. She is brought in contact with new and better influences, and profiting by them becomes in time a sunbeam in her uncle's house, and the means of softening the heart and quieting the tongue of the aunt who was once her terror and dread. Mrs. Clark has a very pleasing style, and is especially skilful in the construction of her stories.

"Yensie Walton" is a story of great power, by a new author. It aims to show that God uses a stern discipline to form the noblest characters, and that the greatest trials of life often prove the greatest blessings. The story is subordinate to this moral aim, and the earnestness of the author breaks out into occasional preaching. But the story is full of striking incident and scenes of great pathos, with occasional gleams of humor and fun by way of relief to the more tragic parts of the narrative. The characters are strongly drawn, and, in general, are thoroughly human, not gifted with impossible perfections but having those infirmities of the flesh which make us all akin.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

NEXT THINGS. By Pansy. A Story for Little Folks. Fully illustrated. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.00. 'This is a bright little story with two heroes, and the lesson it tries to teach young readers is to do the work that lies nearest to them first; in other words, "What to do next. No one can do the second thing; he can do the first." Bound up in the same cover is a capital story called "Dorrie's Day," in which are related the adventures of a little girl who went to sleep in the cars and got carried out of her way. The history of what she did, and how she got home, will interest the children.

MRS. HARRY HARPER'S AWAKENING. A Missionary story by Pansy. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.00. This is one of Pansy's "lesson books," in which, under the guise of a story, she drives home a truth so thoroughly that the dullest and most unimpressible reader cannot help seeing and feeling it. Mrs. Harry Harper was a young wife in a strange city, without acquaintances, and with nothing to do during the long hours of the day while her husband was absent at his business. One day in walking aimlessly along the street she follows a crowd of ladies into what she supposes is a bazar, but what she soon discovers to be a missionary meeting. Her attention is excited by what she sees and hears; her sympathies and religious feelings are awakened, and she enters into practical Christian work with all her heart and soul. The book is one of serious purpose and falling into the hands of people like Mrs. Harper will be a means of undoubted good.

PIZARRO; or, The Discovery and Conquest of Peru. Illustrated. Edited by Fred H. Allen. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.00. This is the third volume in Mr. Allen's valuable little series, and is a concise and interesting history of a country which at this very moment is undergoing a conquest as bloody and exhaustive as that which occurred 350 years ago, when the Spanish ancestors of the present race of Peruvians carried fire and slaughter into the homes of the native inhabitants. The story is told with spirit, and with enough detail to enable the reader to get a clear and connected idea of the different campaigns of Pizarro in South America from the time of his landing on its shores in 1509 until his assassination by his own countrymen in his house in Lima in 1541.

CRITICISMS.

MY DAUGHTER SUSAN. By Pansy. With fifteen illustrations by Miss Humphrey. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Paper covers, 50 cents. Here is a book, to use an expression of Hawthorne, transfixed with a purpose. A book for summer reading, bright, sharp, and thoroughly interesting, and yet containing something more than a mere story. Its keynote is temperance, and we doubt if any lecturer ever put his arguments in more telling shape or made his illustrations more fascinating than the author has done in this little work. "My Daughter Susan" is an original character; a woman of strong mind and fixed principles, brilliant and sympathetic; the life of social gatherings, and yet a most determined opponent of the various temptations which are offered at such places in the way of wines and intoxicating liquors. The book is the history of her experiences for a single day, and shows what can really be accomplished by determined effort in a righteous cause. The illustrations are capital and add to the attractions of the volume.

A NEW SUMMER BOOK.

"My Daughter Susan" is in Pansy's best vein, and nothing more need be said to those acquainted with her writings. With rare insight into character, and as rare a gift for story-telling, she unites a humor bubbling over in perpetual fun, and an intense earnestness, loathing meanness and wrong, which keep a reader vibrating between laughter and tears, and revive the best elements in his nature. Her books are of the healthiest kind, and admirable companions for summer travel. The illustrations of the volume are particularly good.

SIX LITTLE REBELS. By *Kate Tannatt Woods*.
25 crayon drawings by *Boz*. Price, \$1 50. Boston:
D. Lothrop & Co.

SIX LITTLE REBELS, is a charming story of five southern children, brought to one of our quiet New England towns during the civil war. If the south has many such families, a great future lies before it, for a finer group of children it would be hard to reproduce in any part of the world. The characters are finely drawn, fresh and natural as a June morning. They accomodate themselves to New England life as if to the manor born; and their adventures, and sporting humor, and loving ways make up a delightful book.

Their temperary home was well chosen. Dr. Warrington is a genuine New Englander, with shrewd insight, quiet ways, and a perfect self-mastery, which assures him great influence over others. His daughter Dolly is a jewel, modest, self-distrustful, but gifted with Yankee faculty, equal to all emergencies; Axy, too, the maid of all work, and Aunt Lucinda are admirable specimens of New England character. The book is certain to be a favorite with children, who will have no end of laughter over the pranks, of Lex, the mischievous colored imp, and as much enjoyment over the sweet prattle of baby Bertie. We can't have too much of such literature.

OUR BOOK TABLE.

POOR PAPA. By Mary W. Porter. Illustrated. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Paper covers, 50 cents. Of all the lately published books in which children bear a principal part, one of the most natural and charming is *Poor Papa*. It breathes the very spirit of childhood, and one is inclined to believe that the author must have drawn her characters from living models. Few writers have the faculty of describing children as they are, and many of the so-called "juvenile" books published are dreary failures simply because their writers have no sympathy with their subjects. The children whom Miss Porter describes are genuine children and not make-believe. They have all the indescribable ways and peculiarities that make little people oftentimes riddles to their elders. Their journey abroad with "Poor Papa," who comes all the way over the ocean for them, their adventures, their quaint observations on what they see and hear, their thorough enjoyment of everything, the comical surprises they are continually giving those around them, are delightfully set forth, and will be as fascinating reading for the older as for the younger ones.

"Poor Papa" is sure to be a favorite. It is a graphic story of the perplexities of a father, left a widower, to care for two children. The father is an artist, absorbed in painting, and having no knowledge of child-nature; while his two children, loving and true, are like young colts, with irrepressible life and spirits, and perpetually in trouble. They have many amusing adventures in Italy, from their rollicking love of freedom and fun, and barely escape with life from a governess, whose martinet habits transform her into an ogre, delighting in torture. But the troubles of papa and children find a happy solution in the advent of a new mamma, the sister of a brother artist, whose fine womanly instincts have helped the children already over many a hard place. Summer travellers will have many a hearty laugh over the volume, and enjoy equally the humor of the children and the perplexities of "Papa."

ENTERTAINMENTS.

ENTERTAINMENTS; Comprising Directions for Holiday Merrymakings, New Programmes for Amateur Performances, and Many Novel Sunday-school Exercises. Collected and Edited by Lizzie W. Champney. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price \$1.00. Mrs. Champney is known as a popular magazine writer, a poet of no mean ability. The volume before us is a specimen of her skill in another direction—that of selection and compilation; a work requiring rare judgment and almost as much ability as would be necessary to produce an original work. The table of contents includes exercises for Temperance gatherings, Fourth of July, Missionary concerts, Decoration day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Principally, however, they are intended for use at Sunday-school exhibitions and concerts. The element of entertainment, says the author, must enter even into religion, if it is to be dear to the popular heart. Entertainments, at any rate, the multitude will have; it only remains for Christians to decide whether they shall make this mighty power a Christian force, or leave all the merry and bright things of this life to the service of Satan. Sunday-school literature is very defective in dialogues and recitations of an attractive character, and the preparation of a programme for such occasions is a matter of supreme difficulty. To make it easier, and to provide a source from which material may be drawn for almost any occasion, the present work has been prepared. Most of the matter is new, and is contributed by persons of experience in musical matters and entertainments of all kinds.

A chapter on "Accessories, Decorations, Scenery," etc., furnishes full information upon those subjects, and a number of patterns for evergreen decorations for Christmas entertainments are given. Taken altogether, the book exactly fills the place for which it was designed, and will be warmly welcomed not only by schools and societies, but in every family where there are children to be amused and instructed.

EXCELLENT BOOKS.

SIX MONTHS AT MRS. PRIOR'S. By Emily Adams. Illustrated. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. 1.25.

"In this fresh little story, which is addressed especially to young girls, the author tries to impress the lesson that the disagreeable and annoying duties of life may be made pleasant by accepting them as inevitable, and asking help from above. Mrs. Prior is the widow of a clergyman, and has been left with five little ones to support. She discharges her servant, and divides the lighter duties of the household between herself and the two eldest of her children, Minnie and Helen. Unaccustomed to any thing but study and play, the girls find it very hard to have their old time appointments for enjoyment circumscribed, and complain bitterly at first. The book gives a history of their experience, and shows how the work that was so irksome at first became in the end a source of pleasure and means of healthful discipline.

"Six Months at Mrs. Prior's" is a sweet story of womanly tact combined with christian trust. A widow, with scanty means, makes a home happy for a group of children, restless, wayward and aspiring, like many American children of our day. The mother's love holds them, her thrift cares for them, her firmness restrains, and her christian words and life win them to noble aims and living. The influence of the christian household is widely felt, and the quiet transforming leaven works in many homes. We can't have too many books of this kind in the family or Sunday-school."

MISS PRICILLA HUNTER, by Pansy, opens a new view for that charming writer, but one eminently popular at the present time. It deals with the payment of a church debt, and shows how an humble woman, with a Christian character which gave power to her words, raised the money to pay off a debt which had long been a hindrance to church growth and to Christian benevolence. Why she did it, and how she did it, is told in Pansy's best fashion: her encounters with crabbed folks, and stingy folks, and folks determined not to give to the church debt, are highly amusing, as well as her devices to get something from everybody.

LINKS IN REBECCA'S LIFE. By "Pansy." Price, \$1.50.
Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.

"Pansy" has no rival as an author of the best class of Sunday-school books. Her "Ester Ried" and "Chautauqua Girls" series are models in that important line of literature. Her new book, "Links in Rebecca's Life," is worthy of a place in the same list. This book is an admirable one. Its tone is healthy and stimulating, without a trace of sentimentalism or cant: and its characters are thoroughly natural, such as any reader can recognize in the community in which he happens to live. The heroine, Rebecca, is intensely human, with a noble nature in which many weaknesses hide themselves and come often to the surface. But she is a Christian of the best type, and her aspirations and hard-fought battles inspire enthusiasm in a reader. The Committee on International Lessons couldn't do a better thing than to circulate this book in every part of the land. It shows how the lessons may be made helpful in the daily life, and how the Old Testament may be taught with interest to an Infant School, or to men and women of every congregation.

ECHOING AND RE-ECHOING. By *Faye Huntington*. Price \$1.50. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co., publishers.

It shows great ignorance of the Sunday-school literature of our day, when one calls it weak and namby-stuff, with an equal mixture of love-stories, and impossible adventures. The censure is just for a certain class of books, but a large library may be gathered of first-class works admirable alike in moral tone and in literary execution, books which everybody can read with delight and profit. "Echoing and Re-echoing" is a book of this sort, a well-told story, abounding with practical lessons, and inciting to a noble Christian life. The most intelligent opponent of religious novels will find his prejudices giving way in reading it, and a fastidious literary reader will be thankful that children have such good books for moulding their literary tastes.



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 037 392 8

